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ALBAN

OR

THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG PURITAN

BY

J. V. HUNTINGTON

AUTHOR OF "LADY ALICE," "THE FOREST," ETC.

The Hind did first her country cates provide
Then couched herself securely by her side.

Dryden.

A NEW AND REVISED EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES

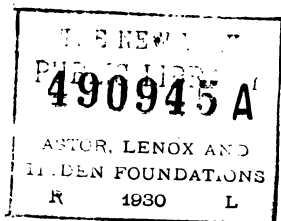
VOL. II.



REDFIELD:

110 AND 112 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

1853.



Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1858,

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ALBAN.

BOOK IV.

THE KNICKERBOCKERS.

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER VII.

OUR hero and his parents appeared punctually at five on Thursday, at the mansion in the Avenue. A sea-coal fire illumined the saloon, where the Rev. Dr. Fluent was already sitting, bolt upright, on a sofa of silver brocade. Mrs. Fluent was nooked with their hostess in the corner of another, — a retiring woman, remarkably pretty withal, as your ministers' wives generally are; and no wonder, since the ministers, if at all popular, usually have their pick among

the young lambs—we mean the young ladies—of their flocks.

At first there was no one else present, and the conversation ran very orthodoxly, the reverend doctor pretty much engrossing it. He spoke *en passant*, but with unction, of a revival in which he had been engaged; and Alban, who knew what revivals were, hardly listened, till the doctor diverged to a paper conflict into which he had been drawn with a high-church bishop, wherein, from his own account, confirmed by Mrs. De Groot, our hero would have supposed the former to have been completely victorious, and to have demolished for ever the figment of Apostolic Succession, if he had not that very morning heard the exact contrary asserted by his cousins the Greys. Then the doctor spoke of Old School and New School, (or “Tweedledum and Tweedledee,” as he termed them;) of Low Calvinism and High Calvinism; and of the Hopkinsian tenet once popular in New England, or that it was necessary to be willing to be damned for the glory of God, which he entirely exploded. This led him to discuss a famous text of the Hopkinsians, which the doctor slipped through finely, by dint of grammar and rhetoric, and thence, to defend his position, his genius and his memory leading him on, plunged into an ocean of quotation,

passage after passage heaving up *ore rotundo*, like waves breaking in foam. It was a novel exhibition to Alban, who was equally surprised and entertained.

The De Groots, however, had invited others. A Mr. Clinton came first — a retired merchant, with his fashionable wife and daughter, people of particularly easy manners, whose arrival entirely changed the tone of the conversation from religion to the chit-chat of the day. Next entered a Mr. Livingston Van Brugh, (so announced,) a tall, broad-shouldered young man of some five-and-twenty, appertaining to Mr. De Groot's own class, his father being a manorial proprietor on the Hudson. After him entered the patroon himself, who alone of all the manor-lords disputed Mr. Van Rensselaer's exclusive claim to that title, and, leaning on his arm, a friend — the Rev. Mr. Warens, minister of the Unitarian church, or chapel, in which Mr. De Groot was a pew-holder. Last of all, glided in the daughter of the house, in virgin white, and a trifle pale.

Mary was saluted by Mrs. and Miss Clinton with a kiss on both cheeks — given by the younger lady with a red flush on her own; to the other guests she made her wonted graceful obeisance, except Mr. Warens, to whom she went up, and shook him cordially by the hand as an old friend. White-haired

Scip announced dinner, and the party filed off through the Vanderlyn cabinet into the dining-room.

An effective scene of domestic splendour presented itself to them as they entered. The table was round, lighted with branches of silver gilt, and in the centre an ancient salt-cellar of the same, terminating in a quaint, spreading flower-vase. The sconces on the walls were filled with lighted tapers, and the old Dutch pictures, the carved oak wainscot and chairs, the sparkling cupboard, the high and broad oak-shuttered window, the rich festive board, the soft abundant light, completed a picture rarely seen on this side the Atlantic. Nor were the guests unworthy of it, at least in outward appearance. Mr. Clinton, notwithstanding his aristocratic name, had been a poor boy and the architect of his own fortune; but he had rather the air of an old noble gracefully decaying after a youth of splendid excess. It was the more remarkable, as he was not an American, but a native of the Green Isle. His wife was a New Yorker, of a fashionable family—Grace church people: all the world knows what that signifies. Their daughter was highly distinguished, brilliantly fair, with a profusion of light brown ringlets, very fine teeth, and a delicate though sensual physiognomy.

Next to Miss Clinton sat Van Brugh, who had a

gentlemanlike countenance, a little marred by dissipation. Mr. Warens was short, thin, and dark, with a bald forehead and penetrating black eye, somewhat restless. The head of Alban's father had become grand and historical as he advanced in years; but slight, pale, irregular in features, and plainly attired, as she was, nature and breeding had written *lady* on the face and mien of Mrs. Atherton, more unequivocally than on those of any other woman present. The time we have occupied in noting this would scarcely have sufficed for Dr. Fluent's eloquent grace, in which he thanked God for every thing but the dinner, and asked every blessing except a blessing on the food.

"The reverend gentleman must have forgot to say his prayers this morning by his taking this opportunity for it," whispered Mr. Clinton to Mary De Groot, while she took off her gloves.

"We must say grace for ourselves if we don't like what is said for us," replied the young lady.

"I observed you 'blessing' yourself. Is that anywhere a custom of Protestants?"

"Blessing myself — what is that?"

"Making the sign of the cross. We call it so in Ireland."

"Oh, indeed!"

"You seem hungry, Miss Mary." — She had at-

tacked her bread. "Be patient and your turn will come for soup."

"My fingers were restless, Mr. Clinton."

"No, I see real hunger sparkling in your eyes. The sharpness of famine is in your youthful face. You have been fasting. This is wrong. Even in the Roman Catholic Church boys and girls under age are not obliged, and generally not permitted, to fast."

"What do you know about that?"

"Living so long as I have, one picks up a deal of miscellaneous information."

We are thinking whether it would not be something in our way to describe the dinner, course by course, as was the method of the old romancers and poets, beginning with Homer. 'A first-rate Knickerbocker dinner is a peculiar, a national thing. We may pass over the inevitable fish and boiled, with a gentle reference to the oysters, which do not taste as if they had been stewed with an equal quantity of old ha'pennies, as oysters always do in Europe, (but we learned to like that coppery flavour,) and to those innocent apples of the earth (let us have refinement in phraseology before all things!) crumbling like pollen, white as lilies, and hot as—don't burn your mouth with them at least. But we can't help a sensation, however we may try to look calm, when that

huge saddle of underdone wild venison appears, with a bright array of silver heaters to cook the slices on the table according to the taste of each several guest. This is our real dinner—a meal which London or Paris or the ancient Baiæ never knew—of which, and of some of the endless American legumes, our innocent and refined predilection, all partake: and we will not spoil it, although a course of small game tempts us not altogether in vain by the bounteous choice it offers—partridges from the mountains, grouse from the plains, canvass-backs from the rivers, and flocks of nameless smaller birds.

What Muse, that neither soars too high nor sinks too low, shall aid us to present the delicacies of the dessert (general cisatlantic name for things separately classed abroad) so refreshing alike to the eye and the palate? Snowy ice-creams—as glaciers descend to the border of flowery valleys—precede by a moment the rich tropical and native fruit and flowers intermingled, that finally stand, with the wines and coloured glasses, on the polished black oaken table.

The patroon, though a philosopher, being also a true Knickerbocker, was proud of his wines. The choicest vintages of France and the Rhine made his cellars almost poetical, and he invited you to try some Madeira which had mellowed for a third of a

century in his garret storeroom under the suns of American summers, with as high and fine a feeling of dignity, almost, as that with which he had received Alban in his magnificent library.

When the weather had been spoken of, and all had agreed that December had been a very cold month, but not so cold as the year previous, that we were now having the January thaw, but that we might expect something severe in February and March, Mrs. Clinton mentioned the new Opera House in Church street; and as this topic was taken up rather timidly at first, owing perhaps to the presence of the reverend clergy, the conversation ran in a general, abstract way on the practicability of establishing this musical luxury in America.

"It can be introduced, but not yet," said Mr. Clinton, who was generally right.

"Never in this country," said Mr. Atherton, senior, with positiveness. "We don't want to pay so much money to hear Italian singing."

Mr. De Groot differed from his guest. "The opera," said he, "has produced some of the sublimest works of human genius. Without it a chasm would exist in the works of the imagination, which ought not to exist there any more than in nature."

"The grander it is as a work of art, the more I

object to it," said Dr. Fluent, looking round and sitting up. "Yes: for that but renders it of all theatrical amusements (which I condemn *in toto*) the most perfect masterpiece of sensual and secular seduction." Dr. Fluent rounded off his periods with an oratorical flourish. "With the opera," he continued, "is necessarily connected the ballet, and the defence so ingeniously set up for the one by our accomplished host, is equally applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the other. Without the ballet, the laws of beauty and rhythmical expression applied to the movements of the human (and particularly of the female) body"—the Doctor was somewhat too scientific here for the ladies—"there would be another chasm in the works of the imagination. This is a *reductio ad absurdum*; for the immorality of the ballet, I hope, will be admitted."

The reverend gentleman finished with a long quotation from a Latin satirist, that threw the few hackneyed phrases which he had already from habit employed completely in the background. He first recited the original with great effect, and then edified the company with an elegant extempore paraphrase. With all his pretension and extravagance Dr. Fluent possessed a scholarship and taste that carried him through. The finest actor could not have done it

better; it told admirably; and Mr. Clinton ironically applauded with his two index fingers.

"I still must think the opera moral," said Mr. De Groot, with a smile. "I can never forget the effect of the Freischutz at Dresden, performed by Weber's own choir. That opera, and Don Giovanni, are as edifying to me as High Mass to a devout Catholic like Mary, or one of Dr. Fluent's eloquent discourses to a pious Presbyterian like her mother."

This caused some gentle laughter; but Mrs. Atherrton looked shocked, and Mary De Groot blushed. Miss Clinton turned quickly to the latter, and leaning somewhat familiarly past Alban, who sat between them, half whispered, "Is that true, Mary? Have you become —? Well, I always thought you would, you know."

Miss Clinton's attention was principally occupied by her other neighbour, Mr. Van Brugh, but she occasionally spared a soft question or two for Alban, looking into his dark blue eyes while he responded, and if any thing was said that excited a general smile, like Dr. Fluent's display, she generally bestowed hers sympathetically upon him, showing her double string of pearls set between a pair of rose-leaved lips. But now our hero found himself appealed to most unexpectedly by his host.

"What is your opinion on this subject, Mr. President?—I heard at New Haven that your son's decisions," addressing Mr. Atherton, "were famous in the Brothers'."

"Were you President of the Brothers in Unity?" inquired Dr. Fluent, with obvious deference. "Pray let us hear your decision. You have heard the argument on both sides."

"A decision from the President of the Brothers' Society!" said Mr. De Groot, in a low voice, and looking round.

"Speak up, Mr. Alban!" whispered Mary De Groot, addressing him almost for the first time.

"The question is the Italian Opera:—can it, and ought it, to be introduced in America?" put in Mr. Warens, neatly.

"*Can it?*" said Alban, plucking up courage, "has been answered by Mr. Clinton. I think we are Europeans still, after all. We have changed our sky, but not our minds."

"Hear, hear!" said Mr. Clinton.

"Black Care behind the horseman sits," quoted Dr. Fluent, (he quoted it in Latin, however,) "and you think, Mr.—Pres-i-dent, that something blacker yet sits at the poop of ships bound from the old world, *novas quærere sedes*." Dr. Fluent pronounced

the Latin so distinctly that even the ladies fancied they understood it.

"I don't know," replied Alban. "I saw the Opera last night for the first time —"

"Did you?" exclaimed his mother.

"And I certainly felt," said he, modestly, "what Mr. De Groot has said so much better than I can, that it was one of the foreordained achievements of the imagination."

The patroon nodded approbation.

"But whether Christianity would not class such creations of genius among the pomps of this wicked world —"

"Well, I *thought*," said his mother, exchanging a glance of satisfaction with Mrs. De Groot.

"Is a question," continued Alban, "upon which I cannot be so presumptuous as to offer an opinion in the presence of the reverend clergy." — Bowing to Dr. Fluent and Mr. Warens.

"Very well done, Mr. Alban!" said Mary in a whisper, and with a smile of triumph.

"Alban dined with Seixas yesterday," observed Mr. Atherton, senior, by way of explanation. "He invited you to go to the opera with him afterwards, I suppose."

"Exactly so, sir. And he told me what I was

surprised to learn, that all the great operatic composers, as well as singers, were Jews."

"I had a dispute on that point with Seixas the other day," said Mr. Clinton. "I maintained that the greatest composers were Catholics in religion, and not even Jews by birth. I wonder if Mozart and Weber were Jews. And even —— and ——, the new composers, and the greatest of all, if they are Hebrews by origin, are Catholics in faith."

"Catholics or Jews, it amounts to the same thing, I suppose," observed Mr. Atherton, senior, with a look of humour. "At least I never could see any difference."

Mr. Clinton reddened, and Mary De Groot opened her candid mouth in a half-scornful surprise; but every body else smiled except Dr. Fluent, who seemed to think that some slight was intended to religion in general. Miss Clinton, with the blended forwardness and tact of an American girl, turned the conversation to Mr. Seixas's liberal support of the Opera, which led to a discussion of his wealth. Miss Clinton was enthusiastic on the subject of his beauty. She thought he was the handsomest man in New York. Alban observed that Miss Seixas was very beautiful—a real Rebecca.

"What jewels she wears!" said Miss Clinton,

turning to him. "If she were not a Jewess it would hardly be in good taste for a *demoiselle*—would it?" Miss Clinton herself was simple as a white rose, yet one of her taper indexes sparkled with a little hoop of brilliants. "And Mrs. Seixas! since the last *bal* we were at at the Tuileries, I have seen nothing to compare with her stomacher."

"I have not seen Mrs. Seixas yet," said Alban.

When Miss Clinton turned again to her other supporter, Mary addressed Alban in a slight tone of pique.

"So you have found some Jewish friends?"

"Very interesting ones."

"I have found some Catholic friends who interest me. One is a young girl—about my age—who possesses finer jewels than Miss Seixas, I dare say."

"You mean virtues?"

"Yes, humility, resignation, devotion, purity, charity, and self-denying love," said Miss De Groot, with a slight flush and speaking quick.

"Mr. Seixas says that the Jewish ladies, too, are remarkable for their virtues; but as I told him"—with an innocent smile—"all your sex are angels—with rare exceptions, like your friend—"

"Hush!" whispered Mary, quickly pressing his arm.

Mr. Clinton, listening, smiled.

Mary gave the latter a little glance of defiance, and pursued, addressing Alban with a frank, resolute air, yet almost with tenderness too —

“It is very true, Mr. Alban; but what in us is only a virtue in the natural order, in Catholics is a grace

“You are a zealous convert,” replied Alban, while Mr. Clinton listened with a peculiar look.

“My poor Margaret Dolman,” she continued; “is nothing but an Irish servant-girl—careless and slipshod as any you will meet; no one has ever taught her to be otherwise;—but such candour of soul! It is not so much her conduct that I refer to—though *that* was beautiful and good—but the sanctity of her motive. ‘You know, miss,’ she said to me, ‘it would be better to die a thousand deaths than offend Almighty God once!’ How *often* I have heard Alexandrine say that!”

Mary raised her voice a little in uttering the concluding sentence, and Miss Clinton gave a start. Mr. Clinton fell into so deep a reverie that he forgot to rise when the ladies left the table.

Cigars and wreaths of smoke curling among the candles! Livingston Van Brugh was now at home. He asked for some brandy and water. Old Scip

brought in a boiling tea-kettle and a silver punch-bowl. All smoked except our hero and Mr. Warens. The latter drew up to Alban and asked about New Haven. He was evidently surprised to meet a young man of untrammelled mind from the orthodox university. Mr. Warens spoke of the want of moral culture among the orthodox.

"They substitute for it," observed Alban, "the spasmodic stimulus of revivals. A young New Englander, instead of regarding the whole of life as a continuous probation, from the dawn of reason to the grave, considers that all depends on being truly converted once. Hence, before conversion, he makes no conscience of his actions, for he is not a Christian. After it, he is careless of his hidden conduct, provided he can retain the belief that his conversion is genuine. If this proves too difficult, the remedy is to give up the old hope and get another. A fresh delusion thus succeeds, and so on, till shame forbids the repetition of the process, or a hardened insensibility is content to dispense with it."

Dr. Fluent had pricked up his ears at this conversation, and now regarded the wainscoted walls with a wild, stern look.

"These are the majority," said Mr. Warens, laughing at Alban's picture. "But all are not such."

"Oh, there are good people among us," said Alban, — "a sort of spoiled angels! They disdain, you know, to do good works to merit heaven, which they consider already secured to them by God's special favour; but they will do something for the Almighty in return, purely out of gratitude. It is impossible to give an idea of the intense spiritual pride fostered by such a system."

"You must get acquainted with liberal Christianity," said Mr. Warens.

"How can revealed religion be liberal?" replied Alban, thoughtfully. "If you deny the faith in one point, you cannot be saved."

"That is Roman Catholicism."

"And Judaism. What religion was ever more intolerant than that of Moses? A liberal Judaism was punished with death."

"Christ has done away with that."

"Yes! the alternative HE offered was faith or damnation."

"You ought to be a Roman Catholic," repeated Mr. Warens, with a slight asperity, while Dr. Fluent, with his massive chin in the air, smiled grimly at the carved Bacchantes of the wainscoting.

"Or—a Jewish proselyte of the gate," said Alban.

"Then you do not accept Christianity at all," returned Mr. Warens, stiffly.

"I believe God spoke by Moses," said Alban, "because the existence of the Jews at this day proves it. I know what Judaism is, and my heart bows before a system of morals evidently divine. 'The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes,'" added Alban, with a certain fervour. "Let Christianity present me similar credentials. Let it show me a people—a polity—built upon it, and witnessing to it, and gifted with like permanence. Let its doctrine seem worthy of God and wholesome for man. Let some one at least tell me what that doctrine is, for after all my inquiries I am still in the dark on that point."

Mr. Clinton had been puffing out volumes of smoke from his nostrils (for he inhaled the weed) and apparently not listening. He broke in with unexpected effect.

"You want a people—a polity, Mr. Atherton,"—Mr. Clinton spoke with a rich unusual brogue, from which he was generally quite free,— "a polity built on Christianity, or rather built by its Founder, sir, to bear witness to it, and existing immutably, like the Jews, in spite of all changes. Sir, the Catholic Church

is such a polity. She can tell you, sir, what Christianity is, and you will find it worthy of God and wholesome for man. You are nearer faith, Mr. Ather-ton, than either of these learned divines. I declare it is strange to see a man in a fog, seeking for what is close at his hand. Any poor Irish servant-girl who knows her catechism could teach you more about Christianity, gentlemen, in five minutes, than you have all learned in your great universities in all your lives."

This outburst was received in silent astonishment, not less than if Mr. Clinton had suddenly given signs of lunacy. Meanwhile, the apparent, because louder, stream of conversation had run in a political channel, whither, by an abrupt defection of Mr. Warens, the whole current now flowed. Nullification, the great speeches of Webster, the policy of Clay, the craft of Van Buren, the rude but patriotic energy of Jackson, were successively discussed. Alban listened in a fever of ambition, and was sorry when Scip brought a message from the ladies that the gentlemen would please come and take some coffee.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the drawing-room the ladies had divided into pairs. Mrs. De Groot took Mrs. Atherton into a corner to tell her (she could keep it no longer) the story of her stepdaughter's sad perversion, to which Alban's mother listened with astonishment, and considerable alarm for her unsettled son. She felt that so eccentric a pair of young people had better have as little intercourse as possible; and when Mrs. De Groot, fearing that Mrs. Atherton might be alarmed for Alban, proceeded to say how much she hoped from his pious influence over Mary, Mrs. Atherton thought herself obliged to let Mrs. De Groot know how much she was mistaken. It was now Mrs. De Groot's turn to be astonished, and to perceive, moreover, that she

had been regularly *sold* by her husband in this transaction, having been allowed to suppose that Mary was attached to a pious and orthodox young collegian, when all the while it was an audacious speculator like Mr. De Groot himself—"one of his own kidney"—as she somewhat hastily expressed herself,—an infidel, a moralist, and perhaps a Jew! Mary, too, had deceived her, like a Roman Catholic as she was. In her agitation Mrs. De Groot nearly suffocated, being, as we have said, inclined to flesh, and tightly laced. Meanwhile, the easy Mrs. Clinton entertained Mrs. Fluent (who was naturally an accomplished listener) with an account of the splendours of their last winter in Paris; and Paris was the theme on which Miss Clinton expatiated with Mary De Groot.

Miss Clinton, whose companion listened with a singular smile, and made half-sarcastic replies, could tell of balls, operas, and carriage-promenades in the Bois de Boulogne, and of the court at the Tuileries. She was enthusiastic about the young French princes, and had danced with the Duc de Nemours. She thought American society so unexciting—no dukes and duchesses, no princes and courts. Mary ought to go abroad. With her beauty and fortune, and aristocratic position, she would have the *entrée* every where, and might marry a duke.

"Thank you," said Mary, with a flash of that pride of provincial noblesse of which she was very sensible; "the duke who marries me will have to come to the Manor to woo me. I sha'n't cross the water for a husband, I promise you."

"Your being a Catholic would add to your currency in the high French circles," observed Miss Clinton, after answering a question of Mary's respecting the churches in Paris.

"I wonder *you* did n't become a Catholic, Henrietta!"

The gentlemen approached from the Vanderlyn room, where, as was perhaps natural after dinner, they stopped in a group to look at the Ariadne; a picture in which Dr. Fluent discovered a great moral lesson, and if the artist had been present would probably have given him his blessing for having produced so edifying a work; but old Mr. Atherton drew a gentle sigh of disapprobation, and took Alban's arm, (being lame from rheumatism,) to halt into the next room and join the ladies — who, by the way, had also been looking at the pictures. Mr. Warens and Mary's father threw themselves on a sofa together to take their coffee.

"How do you like the youth, Warens?" Is he fit to be *my* son-in-law?"

"A brilliant fellow, but eccentric. Says he's a Jew."

"Ha, ha! Better a Jew than a Papist. The Jews are Unitarians, Warens."

"And Romanists are Christians. I am sorry to see you so bitter."

"Look at those girls, Warens, with Van Brugh and young Atherton doing the agreeable to both. Do you see how Henrietta Clinton's eyes turn sparkling from one to the other? What a sympathetic smile! Livingston, you see, is a trifle too familiar—he has taken punch enough to stir his Dutch blood—and she laughs and edges off from him. How quiet, on the contrary, is Mary De Groot. She has colour since dinner, but her eyes are fastened on the magnificent head of old Atherton as he bends over that table of miniatures."

"Like the virtuous Moabitess, she follows not young men, whether poor or rich."

"I would rather," said Mr. De Groot, with irritation, "see her flirting like Henrietta Clinton, than hiding filial disloyalty under that modest show."

"You shock me."

"I have had experience. The moment your wife or daughter embraces this religion, adieu to confidence! They betray you, and think it a merit. I

have suspected ever since she came home that there was some nonsense going on. Miss (a healthy, growing girl) has thought fit to dispense with her breakfast these two days, and dine on fish and vegetables. When she had got so far as this, every thing absurd was to be expected. This morning she quitted the house long before day, joined some women who waited for her under the street-lamp, (I saw it all from a window,) and hied away—to mass, no doubt. Things are come to a pretty pass when Mary De Groot can do that!”

“It is a strange step on her part. She has always been so proud and discreet.”

“And so candid! But ’tis ever thus. I adored her mother; yet the thought was ever between us, that unless I adopted her faith, I was the future companion of devils—the food of Hell, body and soul!—Is it nothing to me that my daughter adopts these dogmas?”

“Hush!”

“No one hears us,” said Mr. De Groot, stirring his coffee till he spilled it.

“But your emotion is evident—you frown so terribly.”

“I shall put a quick stop to these proceedings.”

“I must have a talk with her,” said Warens.

"You might as well talk to rocks and hills, and expect them to soften and bend, as to a Catholic convert in the immutable certainty of her supernatural faith. I had hoped young Atherton would give another turn to her ideas."

"It would have been a finer policy to discourage *him*, if you wanted to make a diversion in that quarter," observed Warens.

"Aye! but there is a further risk with Mary De Groot, which you do not understand," returned her father, in a softened tone. "Did you ever drive a filly that had a trick of backing? Then you know that when she inclined to go forward, you were bound to give her her head freely. If Mary is disposed to fall in love, it is not my part to thwart her. If Atherton were not such a chilly chap—if it were only a *man*, like Van Brugh, (whom she cannot abide)—but she likes the youth, and in truth I have no reason to complain."

Soon after, Mr. Warens quitted his friend, set down his coffee cup, and drew Mary aside.

"As your pastor," said he, "I feel bound to remonstrate with you in regard to your present course. At least consent to postpone this matter of choosing a new religion for a year or two. When you are of a suitable age to decide such a question, and have fairly

read what has been written on both sides of the argument, if you still persist in your views, which perhaps you will not, your father will probably withdraw his opposition, or if he does not, your other friends at least will sustain you."

"Can you assure me that I shall be alive a year or two hence?" answered Mary with animation.

"Certainly not: but should any thing happen to you in the mean time, God is too good (even if you are right) not to excuse a delay which proceeds only from filial duty."

"What does 'the great Teacher' mean then," responded Mary, quickly, "by what he says about loving father or mother more than Him? If I had any doubts," continued she, "delay would be reasonable: but I have none. And I don't want to read any books against my faith. I don't mean to read any, either:—depend upon that. Can I answer their arguments, sir? Can I expose the falsehoods with which (I am sure) they are filled? No, no, my dear Mr. Warens, my course, as you call it, is quite simple, and quite necessary too. Papa once told me that sixteen was the age agreed upon between my own mother and him, when I should be at liberty to choose my religion. I am sixteen and a half already,—God's time to claim me is come—and I

must insist, in my mother's name, on the agreement being fulfilled. My choice is made."

"Your father said well that there was no use in talking to you."

"On this subject, none," said Mary, "since my mind is made up."

"At least you can give some reason for an opinion which you hold in so positive a manner," said Mr. Warens.

"You would despise my reasons," Mary answered.

"How do you know that? But pray, let me hear them. I am curious to know what has convinced you."

"For so young a person as I am, and one of my sex," said Mary, with a smile, "it is enough to say that I believe, without giving a reason."

"When one so young, and of your sex, takes upon herself to act so independently, she ought to give a very good reason, or pass for a very wilful and unreasonable character."

"My chief reason," said Mary, raising her eyes from the carpet, the woven flowers of which she appeared to have been studying, "is that the Catholic religion, in all that it requires, is so exactly *conformable* to reason. Whatever it commands is good, and no one could live according to it, without being excellent in every respect. This wins my confidence for what it

teaches, sir. For instance —— ” she hesitated, but Mr. Warens gravely listened, and so she went on — “it must be a good thing to mortify one’s appetites, since every one acknowledges that to indulge them is contemptible. So occasional fasting, and abstinence from the pleasanter kinds of food, must be allowed to be reasonable precepts for a true religion. To confess one’s sins to the minister of God is the same: —every body must see how reasonable that is. It is what I should expect a true religion to enjoin, sir. Just so, to punish oneself for one’s faults by a penance suited to their badness, is so evidently proper, that from the moment I had thought of it, I could not regard any religion as true which dispensed with it.”

“Enough,” said Mr. Warens, rising hastily. “You are further gone than I supposed. Well, Mary,” he added, “however I may regret your course, my friendship for you will always remain unaltered.”

“Ah!” cried she, tears springing to her eyes, “it is already altered, when you find it necessary to say that.”

He turned back as he was leaving her.

“Your father, I must warn you, will be very severe, and perhaps take pretty decided measures,” said he.

"I fully expect it," replied she, with a spirited air.

As he left her, she dashed away the tear. "I am left quite alone," said she to herself. "There is no one to take my part—unless it is Mr. Alban. Papa fancies now that I am in love with him, and is very willing;—I understand that too. It is a great mistake on papa's part, for I only prize Mr. Alban as a friend; but I wonder if I cannot turn it to account in these difficulties which I foresee. Nothing shall prevent my being baptized on Saturday, I am resolved. Not that I believe in dreams, which my catechism tells me is wrong, and forbidden by the Church; but here it is only to act as we always ought, as if every day were to be our last. To-morrow morning I will not go to mass. That will allay papa's suspicions. But on Saturday morning I must be able to get away in time, and it would be a good plan to have a carriage ready to take me straight to the Cathedral. What am I going to do? What a strange presentiment I have that my mysterious warning is going to be accomplished! Suppose my father (when I return, or on the very Cathedral steps) should renounce me as a daughter, and bid me never enter his door again! If I should be forced, step by step, to throw myself for ever on Mr. Alban's protection,

and then die, or be killed the same day! But no; surely the time for such tragedies is gone by, and, besides, I know very well that I would not, in any necessity, extricate myself by giving my hand to an infidel, or, for aught I know, a Jew, though he were the most amiable, most gifted, and most correct young man in the world!"

So saying, she rose and joined Alban, who was now alone, Van Brugh and Miss Clinton being at the piano.

"Are you really going to turn Jew?" she asked, with vexation.

"The Jews do not admit proselytes now," replied he, smiling. "Nevertheless, I am going to the Synagogue on Saturday, to witness the ancient worship."

"On Saturday! to the Synagogue!" exclaimed Mary.

"Shall I have the pleasure of your company. It is not like going to a church, you know. The ladies all sit by themselves in a gallery. But I will introduce you to Miss Seixas, who will make you feel at home."

"I go to the Synagogue on Saturday next!"

"I remember—it is your fated anniversary."

"If I consent, you will say nothing about it beforehand—especially—to papa?"

"It shall be a profound secret."

"Will you come for me in a carriage?"

"Of course. It is going to be quite a mysterious adventure."

"At such an hour as I shall designate?" continued she.

"To say nothing to your father of your intention—to bring a carriage—and at such an hour as you shall designate?" said Alban, with a musing regard.

"I appeal to you as a gentleman, and my true knight," said she, with a slight tremulousness.

"Command me, Lady Mary," said Alban, gallantly bending, as if he would have kissed her hand. "The Synagogue service," added he, "lasts from eight to twelve."

"I will let you know what hour will suit me when I know it myself," said the young girl with an air of suppressed agitation. "I count upon you on Saturday, remember."

"You may do so with confidence," said Alban.

And now, by twos and threes, white-necked young ladies and white-waistcoated, or at least white-gloved, young gentlemen dropped in. A rattling fire of small talk ran along the intricate battle-line of silken seats. The piano, which had merely motived a desperate flirtation between Van Brugh and Miss Clinton, awoke into life. There was a heavy cannonade of instrument-

ation, and a brilliant charge or so of songs. Some of the new-comers clustered round the beautiful daughter of the house, whose return home seemed the occasion of this reunion; others swarmed round the piano and music-racks, ferreting out the most approved pieces. These were not the charming negro melodies, since so popular, nor the noble German airs, but some Italian opera-bits, Mrs. Hemans' romantic ballads, "The Sea," "The night was dark," and other old favourites now forgotten.

Accustomed to a society with a deal more whale-bone in it, our Alban was equally surprised and gratified by the facility with which he got acquainted with Mary De Groot's friends. A most unusual sympathy and mutual kindness appeared to exist between these young people, as well as a spirit of frank enjoyment which he had not elsewhere observed. In the surnames of those to whom he was introduced, he perceived one cause of this difference. It was a set of Stuyvesants and Brevoorts, Gansevoorts and Van Rensselaers, Van Brughs and Livingstons, De Witts and De Lanceys. As the evening advanced, a marked disposition to romp developed itself in this very well-dressed but very inartificial circle. Dancing, which they tried first, did not appear sufficient for their spirits. Different plays were proposed. Mary De

Groot objected to several, and finally blind-man's-buff was carried by acclamation.

"Oh, really!" said Alban, "are these grown-up young ladies and gentlemen going to play blind-man's buff in your father's beautiful rooms?"

"As sure as fate," replied Mary, laughing and spinning away from him in a dancing step, with her drapery spread and whirling around her.

In short, they were soon all racing through the saloons like children, dodging behind chairs and tables, springing over divans, hiding in corners. There was much laughter, now and then a scream, and the young gentlemen who were blindfolded handled the young ladies, when they caught them, rather freely. Alban could not help suspecting that this was half the charm of so rude a game. Van Brugh really carried it quite too far, particularly with Miss Clinton, who was caught more than once. The last time, she captured Alban. He was so modest that he would never have detected those who suffered themselves to be apprehended, particularly as he was not yet well acquainted, and he invariably called the names wrong, amid bursts of laughter. He began to feel annoyed. He had observed that Mary, while she entered into the amusement with spirit, running like a little deer, and perfectly wild with fun, always contrived, in whatever

awkward position her sportive fancy involved her, to effect her escape. Livingston, with one eye (as all believed) unblinded, pursued her once with pertinacity, but he might as well have chased a ray of light. Now our hero had perceived some one hovering near himself, evidently of the long-robed sex, who evaded his pursuit with a similar dexterity. At last, she stood on the opposite side of a gigantic vase; they went round it once or twice; suddenly, whether accidentally or purposely, her hand rested on his, and with a quick motion he caught it. There was a laugh. He drew her into the middle of the room. Was it Mary or was it not? He could have decided the question in a trice by feeling her temples, for no other girl present had the hair similarly arranged. It was a liberty which the young men had taken with their prizes without ceremony. While he stood considering, the hand, at first passively resigned in his, made a slight effort to withdraw itself.

“It is Mary De Groot.”

The young lady removed the bandage from his eyes amid a general silence. All the youths and maidens were gathered in a close circle round them, looking over each other's shoulders. Then they all laughed, and the young ladies demanded, “How did you know?” — others exclaimed, “You saw!” and

one, "There's some freemasonry here!" Henrietta Clinton said, "It is magnetism." But Alban, tying the handkerchief over Mary De Groot's eyes, said, "There are moral as well as physical signs of individuality." Mary said nothing, and darting off, in a minute or two had caught and named quite a little girl — the youngest of the party, whose eager, shrieking flight and vexation at being captured were extremely amusing.

CHAPTER IX.

THE company were gone, and Mary De Groot was just about to say good-night to her parents, when her father, in a particularly quiet tone, invited her into the library. Silently, and dismayed, she followed him, and presently they were alone in the lofty book-chamber. The gloomy circling gallery seemed to frown around them, as Mr. De Groot placed himself in his study-chair, and motioned his daughter to her stool. The fire was expiring in the grate, and a solitary burner in a chandelier of Berlin iron, which represented a mass of shields, swords, spears, and other weapons, offensive and defensive, cast a cold light upon her virgin drapery: her father's face was wan and white.

"It is necessary that we should have an understanding," said the latter, in a voice that trembled with suppressed passion.

"On what subject, papa?" faltered the young girl.

"Your morning walks, and the intention to which they point. You go to mass, I suppose, when you leave the house before light."

"That is what I have done for two mornings, sir. I do not intend to go to-morrow morning," said Mary.

"You are treacherous, ungrateful and unfilial," said her father. "After all my indulgence — my readiness to gratify your least whim! You ask to return home, forsooth, that you may learn to fulfil your duty as a daughter, and the first thing in which you are detected is stealing away before light, to the mummeries of the mass, disapproved and detested by both your parents. I can characterize such conduct," added he, vehemently, "but by one word — hypocrisy."

"Oh, papa! that is unjust! You knew that I had embraced the religion of my mother, and you might surely infer that I would practise it."

"You have embraced a religion! A chit of sixteen! a child just out of school, and taken out too soon! Your religion is to listen to the advice of your

living parents, and to obey their commands," said her father, with some violence.

"I am sixteen and six months," replied Mary, "and Sister Theresa says that St. Agnes was only thirteen when she was martyred. Father Smith says the Church has decided that when children are old enough to have faith, they are bound to embrace the true religion whether their parents consent to it or not. It is plain, papa, that I have a right to be *baptized*," she continued, with a bright and sparkling courage: "and to whom shall I apply for baptism? Not to mamma's pastor, surely; for he would say that I had never been converted. Not to yours, papa; for Mr. Warens does not believe in the Trinity. Oh, I must go to the Church, of course — there is no other way for me. And *soon*, papa — or else I may die, young as I am, and lose Heaven; — and *secretly*, papa," — with increasing spirit, — "for you know you would try to prevent it, and why should you and I have a fight about that?"

Here were precious fruits of the education which Mr. De Groot, in his days of theory, had bestowed upon his child. He had treated her as an equal; had accustomed her to be guided by reason alone; and now in the first moment of collision between her reason and his — her will and his — nature sparkled

up before him, and showed, before grace could come to the rescue, or the filial feeling interpose, or feminine delicacy soften the expression, what an untameable and self-poised thing it was.

Her father stared at her with mingled astonishment and wrath depicted on his countenance. He grew almost livid, so that Mary began to be frightened. Starting up, he seized her wrist. His lip became flecked with a slight foam, and his respiration laboured.

"You defy me, do you? What hinders me, insolent girl, from inflicting the summary punishment such language to your father merits?"

"It is the first time, papa, you ever threatened to whip me — now that I am a woman!"

He flung her arm from him, as if by a violent effort at self-control, and resumed his seat. She glanced at her empurpled wrist. Then she looked at her light and elegant party dress, and at the white rose in her bosom; and her head, crowned with buds of the same, mixed with rich green leaves in her raven hair, seemed, as it bent down, to protest against this violence. Haply, this modest elegance pleaded for her. Reproaches are sometimes excuses in disguise.

"Your conduct, Mary, whatever you may think, is a treason to that love which once bound us together as father and only child. You have wounded me

in the tenderest point — robbed me of the hope of years. From the daughter and friend you have voluntarily sunk into a slave, doing things by stealth, abusing confidence reposed in you. You can no longer be trusted. Generous, delicate treatment is become inapplicable to you. Harshness, strict surveillance, and physical restraint, must take their place.”

“Papa, you wrong me indeed,” replied his daughter, in a heart-broken tone. “Last fall you refused to let me be baptized by Mr. Warens. I thought it was a shame for such a great girl to be unbaptized, but I submitted. Now I *must* receive baptism. I believe it to be necessary to salvation. I may die very soon. Did I trust to dreams I should have some reason to think that the day of my death is at hand.”

“What stuff!” said her father.

“Nay, sir, hear my story,” continued Mary. “It may be silly, but you shall not accuse me any more of want of openness.”

She told the story of her dream plainly and without a blush.

“And to whom do you expect to be married next Saturday?” demanded her father.

“I expect nothing of the kind, papa, you may be sure, unless some dreadful accident, or the misfortune of being cast off by you, should bring it about.”

"I am to conclude, then, that in anticipation of dying next Saturday you have been baptized? or is that still future?"

"I am not so weak as to be governed in my conduct by a dream. Saturday has been appointed for my baptism, and I would not yield to a superstitious feeling so far as to ask for an earlier day."

These ingenuous avowals had not the effect which might have been expected. Mr. De Groot surveyed his daughter with a look of stone. What he said partook, nevertheless, of his characteristic composure, though broken by more than one sudden burst of almost inexplicable passion.

"When you were born at the Manor," said he, "there was no Romish priest to be had short of New York. Your mother, though the least ailment incident to infancy excited her anxiety for your salvation, was willing to postpone the great remedy for the guilt you had incurred by being born, until it could be administered with all the ceremonies. From your birth till her death I resided constantly at the Manor for this very reason. Once a year a priest came up that she might fulfil the obligations of her religion, and then I had to undergo a species of martyrdom to prevent your being subjected to this magical rite which was to make your Maker cease hating you. I

was determined to allow no incantations over my innocent child! I had to tell your mother," said Mr. De Groot, with vehemence, "that a priest should never cross my threshold, for such a purpose, unless over my dead body." He rose and repeated it, as if the words called up the scene, and looking at Mary as if she were his departed wife, struck his hand violently upon the table, saying again,—“Never—unless over my dead body!” He was white as a sheet, and stared as if he saw a ghost. Again he struck the table violently. “Never shall a popish priest enter my house for such a purpose—unless over my dead BODY!”

“Papa!” said Mary.

He looked at her wildly, and sat down again, glaring still; his hand trembling and clenching itself. He passed it through his hair and resumed.

“When she was dying I had a priest sent for, to save her from the horror of leaving the world without the sacraments—a horror which caused me horror. At that time I had a last contest with her on this point. She said—but no matter for that! Do you think that, after having been deaf to her entreaties and wild, absurd threats, under such circumstances, I shall yield now to your wilful fantasies? Do you think it?” said her father, rising again,

and glaring at her. He resumed his seat. "I shall take care of you for a few days, as I would if you were out of your senses. You fancy something supernatural has occurred to you! At your time of life girls are subject to these illusions. I shall contrive it so that you get over next Saturday without either wedlock, or burial, or baptism. After that, I will talk to you again. Be sure that I shall not permit you, at your inexperienced age, to be inveigled" — Mr. De Groot again (apparently because he could not help it) struck the table forcibly with his hand — "*inveigled* by the arts of Romish priests or nuns, into committing yourself to a system of vile trumpery and imposture" — again his manner became violent — "of vile trumpery and imposture. Entice a girl of sixteen — without the knowledge of her parents — to throw herself into their detested sect! A young lady of fortune — an heiress! Never was any thing more base. But they will find in me an older and more determined opponent than they dream of."

A chasm had suddenly gaped at the daughter's feet! In the father she still loved next to God, what new revelation of insane violence and hate! what a drear change in their mutual relations — drear and scarce credible! As soon as Mary really understood it, she behaved in a quite feminine and filial way, threw

herself at once at her father's feet and implored his forgiveness, if she had forgotten the respect she owed him. He bade her rise, and desired her to go to her room, accepting with coldness her kiss of good-night.

In the hall Mary paused a moment, hesitating whether even yet she ought not to return and humiliate herself still more, but she glanced at the arm which bore the mark of her father's fingers, and catching up her robe with feminine spirit, flew up to her own apartment. Here the crucifix recalled her quickly to humble and patient thoughts.

While she was yet kneeling at her mother's *prie-dieu*, her stepmother entered unbidden. Our heroine's rapt expression, her large dark eyes fastened on the crucifix, her lips just moving, the beads dropping between her slightly clasped fingers, were a picture of devotion, which, unconscious as it was, excited the latter's instinctive disgust. Had any convenient weapon of destruction been at hand she would have dashed in pieces the image which appeared to her the object of this worship, in a transport of iconoclastic rage.

"Idolatress!" was the only word she could at first utter, and Mary, a little astonished, listened in silence to such a reproof as the indulged child had never received before. Finally, Mrs. De Groot directed her daughter in a severe tone to read, before retiring,

the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and withdrew, locking the young lady in. The philosophy of sixteen could not repress some tears at this humiliating treatment, but it was some consolation to the youthful confessor, in these new circumstances, obediently to read the chapter assigned her, where she learned that the Patriarch Jacob when dying, prescient of the wood of the cross on which the World's Salvation was to hang, "adored the top of his rod."

Let it not be supposed that these are imaginary scenes, or that the violence is overdrawn; on the other hand, it is not pretended that the behaviour of our young convert is absolutely perfect; let it suffice that it is natural. To have a right will is possible at any age, but to be free from all imperfections at sixteen is rare.

CHAPTER X.

AN Irish girl came out of the garden-gate of the great house with a bonnetless head and a pail of dirty water. Another girl was passing and repassing, and watching from a distance. The latter drew near, and the two recognised each other.—“What, Ann Murphy! is that you?”—“The Lord save you! is it Margaret Dolman?”—so they stopped and chatted.

- “And sure it was a dreadful sin to keep Miss from bein’ a Christian,” said Ann. “And there’s Catharine—that’s the chambermaid—she towld us this morning that Miss was locked up, and there was a talk among the servants that she was wantin’ to run away with a young gentleman that was here to see her the day after she came home—a young

college gentleman he was—but niver a sowl of us suspected it was because Miss was going to be a Catholic like her mother. And sure this very mornin' when I set her room to rights, the cross and beads was gone. And no wonder Miss looked as if she'd niver a frind left in the worrld."

"I don't believe she'd be for mindin' any thing at all, if she was only baptized," said Margaret. "And to-morrow morning it was to be. Pity it wasn't yesterday, and the devil himself couldn't help it now."

"Troth, but it's cruel. To think there'd be such heathens," replied Ann. "And I would have me clothes torn off me back for Miss Mary any day, but what can *I* do, Margaret dear?"

Here a loud cry of "Ann! Ann!" from the kitchen windows, separated the two girls in haste.

Our friend Margaret had waited for Mary De Groot that morning until the day broke, when she had proceeded to the Cathedral and informed Father Smith how the young lady had not appeared. On her return home, by the good father's suggestion, Margaret boldly knocked at the door of the great house, and asked to see Miss De Groot; but this had been foreseen, and she was sent away without any satisfactory answer. Urged by attachment and grati-

tude, she had loitered about the house, until at length she established, as we have seen, a communication, such as it was, with its inmates. Many times in the course of the day did Margaret pass by the garden-gate of Mr. De Groot's stately mansion, in hope of renewing the conversation with Ann, and perhaps getting a message to Miss De Groot, but Ann never appeared. Leaving her to her humble and affectionate anxieties, we shall return to Alban.

We have mentioned his calling upon his cousins Grey. He did so in all his vacations. They were relatives of that beautiful and spirited Mrs. Atherton, who was introduced to us at Yanmouth in the opening of this volume, and to whom our hero owed his name. Types of a class rapidly disappearing, but which in our youth gave the better society of New York a savour of quiet old-country gentility, that carries us back to Tory days and colonial manners, they lived in a sort of clerical street near old King's College — such a street as nowhere exists in New York now. Low half-blinds softened the light in the southern parlour and excluded the gaze of passers-by. The walls were hung with prints of British battles, encircled at this festive season with rich green wreaths. The Greys were kind to Alban, and a good deal pleasanter than his Presbyterian friends

in his then turn of mind. They were great laughers. They laughed about Presbyterianism, and prophesied that he would be a Churchman. They advised him, laughingly, to attend Wednesday and Friday prayers. It impressed him so favourably, that the next morning, at eleven o'clock, he sauntered into St. Paul's chapel.

A few High Church old ladies, mostly in weeds, one elderly gentleman, a young man looking forward to the Episcopal ministry, who responded very loud, and the sexton, whose loud parish-clerk tone was heard in the gallery, constituted with our hero the congregation. The small number present scarcely diminished the impressiveness of the service, and rendered it perhaps more soothing. The fine old chapel, with its beautiful Corinthian columns and nobly recessed chancel, the numerous mural tablets, the high pews, the lofty white pile of the reading-desk, pulpit, and sounding board, all handsomely carved, contributed to the effect. The peculiar, deliberate sing-song of the rector, whose locks were already prematurely sprinkled with gray, his quiet, yet interesting air in going through the service, and even the soft, regular, impressive gesture of his hand, that reposed on the cushion of the desk in reading the lessons, were singularly in harmony with all the rest.

"We have here," thought Alban, "a venerable Church, a beautiful liturgy, decorous forms, a sober piety, equally removed from the extravagances of Puritanism and the superstitions of Rome. I like this notion of a week-day service. Even if ill-attended, it is an impressive witness to the duty of worship; and to the few who gather here, how consoling!"

At that period Morning Prayer was read in Trinity, and its two chapels, on Litany days, at the hour which we have already mentioned. This was all the week-day service of a regular kind in about twelve large city parishes of the Episcopal Church. This, however, was an inestimable consolation, as Alban observed, to those who knew how to appreciate it. The mutual reciting of psalms, the reading of Scripture lessons, the beautiful suffrages of the Litany, made an hour of ancient calm in the vulgar hurry and noise of the commercial emporium. Since '35, there has been a great development in the Episcopal Church, in the way of week-day services. We find by the "Churchman" of the present date that seven churches of that denomination in the city of New York have daily Morning Prayer, and four of these the Evening service also. In one there is a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. This may seem little, considering

that the whole number of their churches in the city is between thirty and forty, and of clergy about seventy, but still it is an increase. The week-day congregations also are larger than they used to be in the old times, and we are sorry to add (for this thing ought to be encouraged) that for some two or three years the movement has been stationary.

It is hardly fair to Episcopalians, but to excite them to emulation, we may compare with this the week-day worship of the Catholics in the same city. In '35 there were but four Catholic churches; but two masses, at least, were said daily in each, eight or nine in all, or one-third (perhaps one-half) more services in a *day* than the thrice as numerous and vastly richer Episcopal congregations sustained in a *week*. We have not yet overtaken our friends in the number of churches or of clergy. Of the former there are only nineteen in New York, and four convent chapels; but the number of daily masses in this city cannot be less than fifty, at a considerable majority of which, if our observation holds, there are communions. On Sundays and Festivals the communions are large; on ordinary days, of course, they are smaller. Sometimes you will see one poor labourer go up to the altar, or a single poor woman. Some — particularly servants, who cannot go out at an early

hour — communicate on Sundays at High Mass, although it obliges them to be fasting till past noon. But be it one or more, rich or poor, high mass or low, the rite is suspended, the white linen is turned over the rail, the confession is said, the tabernacle is opened, and the people kneel. The things that are said are said softly, although they are so beautiful that in a Protestant Church they would be proclaimed as with a trumpet. He comes and departs almost in silence, as of old: — *He shall come down like rain upon the fleece, and as showers falling gently upon the earth.* Who thinks of that unfailing early, and that latter, rain which descends on the mountains of Israel? Who thinks of the fragrance that ascends unceasingly from its humble valleys?

Our hero came out of St. Paul's into the thronged Broadway. Sights of this world assail him: a theatre, a museum, a Hotel de Ville, and "stores" without end — hat-stores, dry-goods-stores, book-stores, any kind of store you like! On the sidewalks are ladies in silken walking-dresses and gay winter-bonnets, rich shawls and splendid cloaks — the gayest promenade in civilization. They are shopping — shopping in the Broadway stores. It ought to be "storing," or else the stores should be shops. Omnibuses there are not many yet, but carriages and cabs not a few. A line

of handsome ones extends along the north side of St. Paul's: in London you would suppose they were private equipages. Then in front of the church, under the protecting image of the great Apostle in the pediment of the portico, are ranged the contradictions (in terms) of which Miss Sedgwick took notice — the Catholic orangemen with their rich brogue and baskets of golden fruit. These are things, indeed, which have passed away already, *i. e.*, the cabs and the orange-men: for a few years on this side of the Atlantic make antiquity, and give us a right to remember.

But we dilly-dally here in Broadway, among the free and loitering crowd, whilst Mary De Groot is a prisoner in her father's freestone palace: she whose graceful step has made this vulgar flagging poetical. Not a square inch on these sidewalks but may have been pressed by her light foot; not a stone on that half-dry crossing on which she may not have stepped. Alban was not quite such a "chilly chap" as Mr. De Groot took him for; he had his enthusiasm too; and certainly we do not blame him for so far worshipping his beautiful and innocent mistress, as to feel thus about the places where she had been.

An elegant chariot stopped before Marquand's as Alban approached that famous shop, and two ladies

got out. One of them arrested her tripping step, and saluted him. It was Miss Clinton.

“Are you buying jewelry this morning?”

“Merely going to have a cameo set. Come in and look at it, Mr. Atherton. It is one I bought in Rome.”

Alban went into the jeweller's accordingly: Miss Clinton produced the cameo, which was large, classic, and admirably cut after an ancient terra-cotta. The subject was the Flight of Helen. The lovers were in a Greek chariot drawn by four spirited steeds. Paris was driving, nude; Helen, graciously draped.

“It is exceedingly admired,” said Miss Clinton.

Our hero admired it, although he thought it required some hardihood for a young lady to wear it on her bosom. Miss Clinton told him that her father was going to build on the Avenue, on the square next to Mr. De Groot. Mrs. Clinton invited him to visit them in Broadway, and after some further chat, at the instance of the young lady he promised to call that very evening. Having handed them into their carriage again, giving his cloak a cavalier sweep, he pursued his walk towards State street. As he went along, he drew a comparison between the young lady he had just left and his friend Miss Ellsworth, and this brought to mind his conversation with Mary De

Groot on the Sound, and the story of her school-days, which again, by an association of ideas, recalled Henrietta Clinton. In such a reverie, he reached the corner of Battery Place, but instead of going directly to Mr. Seixas's he crossed over into the Battery, and pursued his way along the north walk, as if to reconnoitre — a remaining symptom of the old college timidity. In this way it happened that when he got opposite the house, (the door being open,) he became the unsuspected witness of an interior scene.

A young lady, whom we shall at once recognise as the beautiful Miss Seixas mentioned by our hero at Mr. De Groot's dinner, was condescending so far as to conduct a gentleman visiter to the door, when the latter, to Alban's infinite astonishment, sunk on one knee and kissed her hand; then springing up, put on his hat, crushing it over the eyes, and darted down the steps. Hurrying forward, directly towards our hero, he plucked from his bosom a little book, which he opened, gazing with evident delight at a number of bank-notes laid between the pages. "Angel!" he exclaimed, as he met Alban at the Battery gate, and passing so near him, that our hero could not help seeing the large X's on the bills, as the wind fluttered them; while at the same time he recognised in the stranger's worn but regular features, and shabby

frock-coat, buttoned with a genteel air over a collarless black silk cravat, the person of an unfortunate poet about town, who was accustomed to eke out a precarious subsistence by soliciting subscriptions for his unpublished, and never to be published, works. He strode on without seeing Alban, although the latter knew him very well, too absorbed in his immense windfall of a subscription, to have eyes or thought for any thing else; and our hero crossed over to the house in State street thinking of Miss Seixas's generosity, and placing the transaction to the credit of the virtues of the modern Hebrews.

He rung the bell, and the sound of a piano and female voice, which he had heard as he came up the steps, immediately ceased.

The drawing-room into which he was ushered, and which, as in most New York houses, was directly off the hall, was a fine old-fashioned apartment, with the ample fire place on its hall side, while the unbroken opposite wall was occupied in its whole length by a yellow satin divan of very oriental aspect, loaded with golden-rayed cushions. The place of the folding-door—between white Corinthian columns—was hung with a crimson-velvet curtain, looped up with a cord and heavy tassel of gold bullion; and beneath this rich drapery it was, that on the evening

when Alban dined with the Seixases, the beautiful Miriam had first presented herself to his gaze.

That apparition impressed him strongly, we may observe. Miss Seixas was apparently about a year or two younger than Alban, tall, elegantly formed, and perfectly beautiful, as has been said, although in a very peculiar style. Her garb, too, was different from the fashion of the day—a glittering dress of light-green brocade, that seemed in the evening light a mass of gold, and fitting closely to her shape, which, despite her manifest youth, had the deep-bosomed, universally undulating beauty of the orient. Her purple-black hair was in plain bands, without a single ringlet, (giving her a very foreign appearance,) and secured by a gold comb in the Spanish style, from which a white lace veil fell nearly to her feet. She bore a jewelled fan. Her face must be imagined—it was on the softest Jewish model, and of a rich golden paleness. Such was the vision which Alban beheld on his first visit to the home of his childhood, as if expecting him there.

On the present occasion Miriam Seixas was more soberly, yet always richly and peculiarly, attired—as if (as indeed it was) in the mode of another clime and country. She rose from the instrument at Alban's entrance, and saluted him with grace. She motioned

him to the yellow divan, and, after ringing the bell, took a seat opposite him upon the ottoman. A moment after, a maiden of inferior aspect, but neatly attired, entered the room, and placed herself in a corner, where she remained, silent, and almost unnoticed, during Alban's stay.

Notwithstanding this etiquette, Miss Seixas was full of affability. She was a musical enthusiast. The opera was her chief passion, nor did she scorn the ballet. She was a proficient in both arts. She sang for Alban some beautiful Spanish songs; she danced Spanish and Moorish dances for his amusement in the most obliging manner. Nothing more oriental, even in a New York drawing-room, than Miriam Seixas with the castanets. The graceful freedom of her movements partook of the heroic, revealing her noble figure in outlines so grand and flowing as to blend rather with feelings of religious awe or patriotic ardour than of love or social gayety. She might have danced (so Alban thought) with her ancestress and namesake on the sands of the Red Sea, or in the procession of the virgins of Zion, before the triumphant returning Ark.

Nor was she without serious thoughts, such as were not unworthy of her origin, and her frankness was unlike any thing he had known. She told Alban that

there were children of the Most High (blessed be He) among all nations, and in every faith which acknowledged His unity, but Israel, though degraded and despised, was his chosen people. She herself was not without hope of being at least the ancestress of Messiah, and would deem it a misfortune, if not a reproach, to die unmarried or childless. She was espoused to her cousin, a Hebrew of pure blood, whom she had not seen since she was twelve years old. Alban had got upon this ground by asking Miss Seixas if she would be courteous on the morrow to a young Christian lady whom he was to bring with him to witness the Synagogue worship. Miriam readily promised to pay her every attention. The young Jewess spoke English with perfect purity, but with a foreign accent.

"It is a high order of character," thought Alban returning home, "but peculiar."

He compared her with his Puritan kinswomen, and with Mary De Groot. A naïve earthliness in the beautiful Miriam reminded him of the old Greek spirit. She seemed not to look beyond the grave. Her idea of her own sex partook of the ancient depreciating estimate, as he gravely deemed. She was the handmaid of man, and aspired to no higher destiny than that which nature had written in such exquisite characters on her very form. The purity which breathed

like a natural fragrance in all her language and manners was different from that of the purest Christian maidens; — it was not the pride of his high-minded and saintly New England cousins, nor the humble vigilance of that charming and clear-headed Mary, who watched so carefully, and yet so unsuspiciously where danger really was, over a sacred but scarce understood deposit — candid as a child, because as ignorant of evil. The young Jewess was not so.

“She sees all in the broad, shadowless light of an oriental noon,” said he, pursuing his revery. “To her there is no mystery. But with Mary the greater part is yet enveloped in the sunrise mist that hangs over and beautifies a rich Western valley.”

After quitting Miss Seixas, Alban returned home to dinner, and it happened that on that day his mother’s uncle, Bishop Grey, whom we met some dozen years before at Yanmouth, was his father’s guest. The bishop had become a most venerable, florid old gentleman, adhering to his knee-buckles, &c., and with long silver locks streaming down upon his shoulders.

Bishop Grey partook of some boiled bass and oysters, and afterwards was helped twice to roast turkey, which some may deem a luxurious Friday dinner for a bishop; but “the measure of abstinence especially

suitcd to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion" (as the Prayer Book luminously expresses it) may vary greatly in individuals. Dr. Grey was a fervent evangelical, and conversed with unction on the subject of personal religion with Mrs. Atherton. At the same time he was a great enemy of Calvinism, and defended Baptismal regeneration, although in a timid way, as conscious of the unpopularity of the tenet. The good bishop, in fact, had a High Church head and a Low Church heart, and that we take to be the perfection of an Episcopal clergyman. When the table-cloth had been removed, with some old Madeira, and a decanter of fine port before him, he became witty and conversational, told anecdotes of the Revolution strongly smacking of Toryism, and gently dissected the Puritans, to Alban's great delight and the hearty amusement of his father, who had small sympathy for religionists of any creed. There was a keen yet calm fire in the old prelate's eye, as he delivered himself of the well-arranged and sweet-toned sentences, not unconscious of his own witty facility. Tea was over before Alban remembered his promise to call on the Clintons, as well as the necessity of learning from Mary De Groot at what hour next morning it would please her that he should come with a carriage to take her to the Synagogue!

It was already eight o'clock. It was at least a mile to the Avenue—about the same distance to Mr. Clinton's in upper Broadway. He half inclined to give up the latter call, but our hero was a man of his word, and he rightly considered that with people whom he knew so slightly a little precision was required, in order not to offend. So to the Clintons he sped, calculating all the way how much time he could give them, so as to have enough left for a call in the Avenue.

Mr. Clinton's was a basement-house; he hurried up stairs after the servant, and found the ladies—*i. e.*, Mrs. Clinton and her daughter—in the drawing-room. It was a large and splendid apartment, all mirrors and gilding, French furniture and satin draperies: but Alban was used to these things now. What did surprise him, he found the mother and daughter in tears, which they were unable to conceal from the young visiter. He feared to ask the cause. Bankruptcy or a death could alone account for such visible grief. He rather insinuated than openly addressed an inquiry to Miss Clinton.

"Would you believe, Mr. Atherton," cried Henrietta, "that papa has declared himself a Catholic? He has been one all along, without our knowing it. It has come upon us like a thunderbolt."

"Is that all?" thought Alban. "*I* could have told you as much last night."

"He has been jesuitically concealing his sentiments from me ever since we were married," exclaimed Mrs. Clinton, with a fresh burst of tears. "But they think deception is right, you know."

"But not on that point, I have always understood," replied Alban. "To conceal their religion Roman Catholics consider, I believe, a great sin."

"Oh, papa expresses a great deal of sorrow for having deceived us," said Henrietta, (a curious expression on her part,) "but what reparation is that now?"

"Pray what did you suppose, ma'am, to be the religious sentiments of Mr. Clinton, when you married him?" inquired our hero, sympathetically addressing the elder lady.

"I never supposed that he had any," cried Mrs. Clinton. "I supposed that he was indifferent to *all* religion, like most men of the world. Why, Mr. Atherton, he took a pew in Grace church, and has been talked of for vestryman!"

"Once or twice in Paris," said Henrietta, "my suspicions were aroused — especially when we visited churches together."

"After all," observed Alban, consolingly, and

taking his usual high, religious tone, "is it not better that Mr. Clinton should be a good Catholic than nothing at all?"

"You don't understand it, Mr. Atherton. Papa is going to take the *children* (not *me*, be sure) away from Grace church—from among people of our own class—to that horrid St. Patrick's, crowded by all the low Irish!"

"Oh, really!" said Alban, much relieved.

"To think of my girls being taken to confession!" said Mrs. Clinton.

"I will never go to confession," cried Henrietta with spirit, "to be asked insulting questions by an unmarried man!"

"Is that the case?" inquired Alban, thinking immediately of Mary.

"Indeed, Mr. Atherton, if you have any influence, as is generally supposed, with an amiable young friend of ours," said Mrs. Clinton, "I do hope you will use it to prevent her exposing herself to such a lamentable influence."

Mrs. Clinton could easily say enough to alarm Alban for Mary De Groot. She was well aware that there is nothing to which the male part of the species is more universally sensitive than to any danger affecting the delicacy of the females in whom

they are interested. Fathers, brothers, husbands, and lovers, are here wide awake, and keenly jealous;—justly so, since it is the question of a jewel that is tarnished by a thought, and the lustre of which, once lost, nothing can restore.

“It is a sad thing,” cried Alban warmly, after listening for some time to Mrs. Clinton’s facts. “Have you placed the matter in that light before Mr. Clinton, ma’am?”

“You might as well talk to the wind,” said Mrs. Clinton.

“To the wind!” echoed Henrietta.

But Alban now rose, bent to keep his appointment with Mary De Groot. Having a pretty clear notion whither the mysterious adventure of the morrow tended, although determined not to forfeit his word to her, he resolved to use every entreaty to induce her to abandon or postpone the design. Mrs. Clinton and her daughter both thanked him warmly for his sympathy, and begged him to call again very soon.

He had already spent more time with the Clintons than he had intended, but Providence that night seemed to throw obstacles in his way as if purposely to detain him. As he was hurrying through the hall below, a servant advanced and begged him to step

for a moment into his master's study. Although annoyed at the detention, he could not well refuse. It was the back basement room, neatly furnished with book-cases, a study-table, study-lamp, and cheerful fire.

Mr. Clinton had a happy look, although his manner was more grave than Alban had observed it the night before at Mr. De Groot's. He did not keep his visiter long in suspense. Not to keep the reader in suspense either, it was about Mary De Groot's intention of baptism that he wished to speak. Alban had not heard of it, which a little surprised him. *He* had heard it from the bishop, who had asked him if he knew the family.

"The suspicion is entertained that Miss De Groot's purpose has either been discovered by her parents, or voluntarily communicated to them, and that she is consequently under restraint."

"Ah!" said Alban, in a tone implying—"What business is it of mine?"

"I have no right to interfere, of course," pursued Mr. Clinton. "Mr. De Groot would brook my meddling in his family concerns, as little as I would his in mine. At the same time I have thought it my duty to do what I can, and, if possible, induce you, Mr. Atherton, to use your influence, which is considerable in a certain quarter, I have reason to think,

to obtain for our estimable young friend the free exercise of her religion.

"Miss De Groot has a right to be baptized," said Alban. "That is incontestable; and I should regard it as a manifest wrong in any one to attempt to prevent her. At the same time, Mr. Clinton, I must say, that I should not be inclined, even if I had the power, to further a step which, in the way she means to take it, is to commit her so early in life to the system of your Church, objectionable as I fear it is in ways of which she probably has no idea. Pardon my frankness."

Mr. Clinton bowed, disappointed, but giving the matter up.

"I do not mean that I consider the Church of Rome anti-Christian or idolatrous," pursued Alban, rising. "I have none of those bigoted notions, Mr. Clinton. My objection is a practical one altogether, founded on what appears the necessarily evil influence of the confessional, and its degrading danger to a young and innocent *woman*—and on what is said with apparent probability of the personal character of the Roman priesthood, with whom this institution brings every member of your Church into so close intercourse. Pardon me again."

"Stay a moment," said Mr. Clinton. "If I could

convince you, Mr. Atherton, that these objections are utterly without foundation—would you use your influence in favour of your young friend's liberty of conscience?"

"I have little time to spare at present," said Alban.

"A quarter of an hour is all I ask," responded Mr. Clinton.

Alban could not refuse a quarter of an hour to be convinced of so much.

"Perhaps you will be disappointed by what I have to say. It is only to state facts observed by myself. If the confessional be what Protestants suppose, how is it that Catholic females of all classes of society, married women and single, mothers and young maidens in the bloom of modesty, but especially those who excel in piety, consider it as the greatest means of sanctification, and the greatest security for an unblemished life? Do you suppose that all these Catholic women and ladies are corrupt, tolerant of insult, and devoid of self-respect?"

"There is great force in that," replied Alban with his wonted candour.

"How is it that Catholic women always entertain an exalted opinion of the goodness, and very frequently of the sanctity, of their own confessor? For

it is a fact that they do. I have heard priests accused by their female penitents of severity, of impatience in listening to confessions, which are often of a tiresome and useless character, or of being prosy themselves, but never once did I hear a complaint of being rudely or improperly questioned. Priests are generally prudent men, to say the least, with a perfect knowledge of what is expected of them. The morals of the confessional, and its proprieties, are well understood, and are rigidly enforced by the law of the Church. And what is more, Mr. Atherton, a considerable number of our clergy — quite enough to raise the tone of the whole body — are saint-like men, whose whole lives are passed in the presence of God. It is such who are always sought after as confessors."

"I can understand," said Alban, "that it must be as you say."

"I am not willing to stop there," continued Mr. Clinton, flushing slightly, although his manner was calm. "I am *certain* that the confessional is an immense safeguard to the purity of both sexes. You must bear in mind, Mr. Atherton, at what age children begin confession. It is at about eight or nine years. Now every body must see that a child of that age could only be benefited by being questioned prudently and in private by a grave and perhaps

aged clergyman, on the subject of any sins into which it may be liable to fall. Imagine an experienced pastor, who is familiar with the heart, hearing the sincere confessions of two or three hundred boys and girls of that age. Of course he will know how to ascertain whether they are conscious of any offence against modesty, in act or word, without suggesting to their minds any thing of which they are happily ignorant. You know, better than I do, in what ways children corrupt themselves and each other at so early a period of life. But suppose they knew they must tell every immodest word or action they say or commit to the *minister* ! ”

“ Ah,” exclaimed Alban, “ would that I had felt such a restraint pressing upon me when a boy ! ”

“ There it is ! Catholic boys, and, above all, Catholic girls, learn at a very early age to avoid such things. The shame of confessing them is too great. Hence, as they get older, they are able to resist in the same way the first beginnings of more serious sins against purity.”

Mr. Clinton told several stories illustrative of the singular innocence of Irish Catholics of both sexes, even at mature age. Whatever else they proved, they proved that the confessional had not tainted such people’s minds with premature knowledge.

"Beautiful!" Alban involuntarily exclaimed, and laughing. "I should like to have been corrupted in the same way myself."

"There have been bad priests, and the tribunal of penance has been abused, like every thing good," said the Catholic layman, "but that does not prevent, Mr. Atherton, that one great motive of my return to the Church, is my desire to secure its advantages for my young sons and daughters. And one thing you may depend upon, that if any thing can arrest the torrent of licentiousness which threatens to undermine the whole fabric of society in this country, it is this very institution. I was tossed about a great deal in my youth, and have consequently seen a great many countries, and I know that in every land where the confessional has been laid aside, the common people are fearfully corrupt. Want of chastity is the shameful mark of Protestant nations as compared with Catholic. North Germany and Sweden, in this respect, are infinitely below Italy and Austria. England and Scotland are not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with poor, ignorant, down-trodden, and degraded Ireland. As for America," added Mr. Clinton, "they say (you know best) that there is great purity of morals in New England."

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"We will discuss that on another occasion," said Alban, rising, "but now I must really go."

"I have said nothing yet," exclaimed Mr. Clinton. "I have not told you, for instance, how edifying confession is; how advice comes home in that sanctuary of conscience, where your adviser knows what you are, for your own good, and brings a vast experience, and the rules of a science perfected by saints, to bear upon your precise case. Let me tell you, Mr. Atherton, since you seem so sincere, that to one who knows the comfort and solidity of this system, Protestant religion seems the most dreary sham."

"I perfectly agree with you in that," cried Alban, "and dare not say that yours is not better."

He ran all the way to the Fifth Avenue. It was half-past nine, but luckily the distance was not great. A light gleamed from the windows of the favourite evening sitting-room. The servant stared in taking his cloak. Still Alban pressed boldly on, and soon found himself in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. De Groot, *tête-à-tête* by a brilliant fire, with the lower shutters and the sliding-doors closed. The clock on the mantle pointed to the quarter before ten.

"Am I really so late? Miss Mary, I fear, has retired."

"She is up stairs," said her father, cordially, "but we will send for her."

Mrs. De Groot herself went to call her step-daughter, who presently appeared, cheerful and self-possessed as if she had been a domestic idol, and sat down with her work at the centre-table. The conversation ran pleasantly for half an hour. Then young Atherton asked for some music, and Miss De Groot played and sang with gayety and spirit—

"She's married the carl wi' a sack o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the poor barley miller."

It was a favourite of her father's, and he applauded it warmly. A servant brought in wine, cake, and fruit, and Atherton, declining the hospitality, rose to depart.

"What a short evening you make of it by coming so late, Mr. Alban. Pray, the next time you call on *me*, come at six o'clock instead of nine," said Miss De Groot, carelessly putting aside her work.

"I will be punctual to the minute, Miss Mary."

Mary was not given to shaking hands, but whenever she did go through that ceremony she did it honestly and cordially. Alban, on the contrary, had a timid, girlish way of giving the end of his fingers to a lady. It was a trait, like the satin softness of

the palm and tips themselves. But he really had muscle under all that velvety surface, and Mary De Groot, saying, "Good night, Mr. Alban," felt an iron grasp which almost made her cry out.

Alban, then, brave and faithful friend, would come for her in the morning, but how she was to leave her room was as great a mystery as ever, when her stepmother locked her in as on the preceding night. Her father was not unwise in this. He was resolved to disabuse his daughter of the idea that her spiritual affairs occupied the attention of the unseen world. That done, she would more easily hear reason, her confidence being sensibly shaken by the failure of one anticipated supernatural interference. Ah, wise one! and believer in the divinity of the soul of man! Dost thou, after all, deem it so little divine, that its endless weal or woe claims not the care of the Immortals? A far less thing would draw them all radiant and powerful from their spheres. But weakest instruments suffice to defeat the most skilful combinations of those who are yet in the clay.

So our brave young heroine prayed fervently without the aid of crucifix or beads, of which she had been vainly deprived, — fervently but briefly, as people of heroic temper do on the eve of a great action, — and

undressed herself singing hymns in a low, veiled voice. She was full of courage, for she had no will but the will of God. When, as her custom was, before extinguishing her light, she threw open the bed-clothes, a dark object caught her eye. It was a key! — “Those Irish girls!” — she wept for joy.

CHAPTER XI.

THE poor heathen father who was determined to keep his daughter from the arms of Christ, was a restless being that night. The devil who had possession of him tormented him grievously, and knowing that the believing maiden would else certainly escape, compelled him at last to rise from his bed, don his garments, and descend into the library to watch, lest his child should defy the polished bolts of her chamber doors, and come forth, according to her mother's prediction, to wed a heavenly bridegroom, and be buried with *Him* in the waters where the old Adam expires. Eugene De Groot had a feeling that he was contending with the dead, — that the mother and he, who had once before struggled

for the soul of their child, were now again antagonists. He swore that he would maintain his paternal rights against the grave itself. Yet he could not but fear his viewless and loving foe, one of whose prayers, perhaps, could crush him in an instant.

Mr. De Groot had a single candle, and he paced his library with both doors thrown open. There was a couch in the library—a green leather couch, and, when he became fatigued, he lay down on it to think and listen. His eye fastened on the iron chandelier of trophies hanging black and flameless over his study-table. Towards five o'clock he fell asleep, and dreamed that his daughter had eloped with young Atherton—not to be baptized, but married clandestinely. All the possible causes of such a step blended themselves confusedly in his dream, gathering vividness from reminiscences of his own wilful youth and her own school-story. He heard their carriage-wheels rolling before him in the dark, while he himself, afoot, pursued the phantom fugitives. He awoke. The sound of wheels was certainly in his ear. He rushed out into the hall, where a taper on a tripod gave a feeble light. There was the broad, oaken staircase, with its green bronzes and flameless lamps casting monstrous shadows on the wall, and he beheld, slowly descending the high-

est flight, a figure like a bride, veiled, and in white, which now passed behind the bronzes, and now came gleaming into view. Was it a bridal veil, or the garments of the grave? Was it Mary from her bolted chamber, or Mary's mother from beneath the willow of the Cathedral churchyard?

Mr. De Groot had been laying plans all night against the very occurrence which had now taken place; yet the actual sight of his daughter escaped from a room where he believed her to be under lock and key, smote him with terror. Your sceptic is proverbially open to superstition. This rationalist believed that he saw the spirit of his Roman Catholic wife. Gliding down the last flight of the stair, Mary necessarily approached him; her features revealed themselves distinctly; and the eyes of the father and daughter met.

"Whither are you going, my child?" said the patroon, whose knees knocked together.

"To church, my father."

"At this hour! in this guise!"

"Mr. Alban Atherton waits with a carriage at the door."

So saying she offered her father a mantle, which lay across her arm, to place it on her shoulders. He mechanically complied. She drew the capuchin

over her head. Her mien was full of womanly dignity, which seemed to rise higher under the outrages it had received. And the name of Alban at that moment was a powerful support, as Mary herself felt. It is one thing to be despotic with a daughter, and another to quarrel with a stranger to your hearth. Nothing bends a purpose, however absolute, (if it be unjust, unbecoming, or violent,) like the certainty that it is to pass under the judgment of a person whose impartial and accurate estimate of conduct you know. The fairness of Alban's mind, his calm, sweet temper, and a certain solidity in his moral constitution, which gave this fine, smooth edge an irresistible force, protected Mary without his presence. Mr. De Groot had himself made young Atherton master of the situation; he had exhausted the force of his own will during the night upon an impalpable obstacle, and now he was led, like the fierce Assyrian, "by a hook in the nose," to do the very thing which he had said a thousand times he would never suffer to be done. He accompanied his daughter down to the lower hall, took his hat and cloak from a hall-stand, composed of huge antlers of deer, and opened the vestibule doors. She fluttered down the broad stone steps to the gas-lit pavement. Directly in front at the curbstone stood a carriage and

several persons. Young Atherton advanced a step or two, rather haughty and business-like. Mr. De Groot half expected to see the point of a rapier protruding beneath his young friend's Spanish cloak. But Mary tripped forward, as if she had been going to a party, and sprang into the carriage unassisted. With feminine promptitude she decided several questions which might have created difficulty.

"Get in, Margaret," she said, "and sit by me. Get in, Mr. Alban, and sit opposite me. Now, papa!"

The coachman closed the carriage-door and mounted the box. Mrs. Dolman was left standing on the sidewalk. Mary directed her to get up with the driver, and they set off.

Every minute or so a bright gas-light shone in at one or the other window, showing the faces of the party within the carriage to each other. Margaret Dolman's countenance, being that of a stranger, naturally attracted Mr. De Groot's attention. It possessed no rich physical beauty or fine intellectual traits—still less that rare combination of both which made his daughter bear off the palm even among the lovely; but it was marked by the sweetness and purity peculiar to practical Catholics in that rank of life. It is the *mansuetudo Christi*, and often infuses its own gentleness into the heart of the beholder unawares.

Some reflection of it speedily softened the sternness of Atherton's glance, which at first said very plainly that he had come to do a certain thing, and meant to do it, let what would betide. Mr. De Groot even yet wondered what that certain thing precisely was, and why Atherton had intervened. No one spoke till the carriage stopped at the back entrance of the Cathedral, when Miss De Groot let down the glass, and called for Mrs. Dolman. Neither of the gentlemen said aught, for neither knew what was to come next. The coachman—a Paddy—helped the good woman down with tender care.

“Go into the vestry, please, my good Mrs. Dolman,” said Mary, sweetly, “and let Father Smith know that we are here.” The old woman went up the creaking wooden steps and disappeared in the hurricane porch. Alban and Mr. De Groot successively bent forward and looked out of the carriage window at the church. Neither could fail to notice those singular adjuncts of the pile—the wooden lean-to, the boarded porch, and its rickety steps. All gave a notion of poverty and temporary shifts, which excited the contempt of the magnificent Anglo-Dutch patrician, but impressed Alban's imagination more than the elegance and ecclesiastical dignity of St. Paul's chapel. Was this the religion for the sake of

which, long ages ago, in the dawn of its mysterious power, maidens of rank and wedded wives quitted before day the palaces of their consular fathers and husbands, to assist, in the dark recesses of the catacombs, at a rite universally execrated, yet pure and holy?

Under no aspect could Alban regard the poor, shabby cathedral with contempt. He could not look without emotions of inquisitive awe upon one of the local centres and radiating points of an influence pervading the earth, which some thought divine and others diabolical, but which all admitted to be, in one sense or the other, supernatural. In this unsightly edifice was the throne of a Catholic bishop, one of a thousand similar seats of spiritual authority, so intimately united together that each became a representative of all, while the highest was but the bond and key-stone—the origin and overflowing fount—of a common supremacy.

Alban had been taught to think, and, strange to say, the idea even now came over him with a mysterious horror, that such a church was one of Satan's visible seats, and the worship offered in it profane and impious. And truly, if it were so, the Prince of this world had a powerful and consolidated empire, militant, by his profounder artifice, not under his own

banner, but under that of Christ. What more signal triumph could Hell obtain over HIM who once conquered it by His death, than by converting His own appointed memorial of that death into a service of idolatry, so that at the very moment when His pretended ministers (but the ministers of Satan, in fact) are repeating the Saviour's words, "As often as ye do this, ye shall do it for a memory of me," His prostrate people adore a creature for Himself?—and they have done it well, for not an instant of time passes that a mass is not offered and the Host is not adored.

Talk of an empire on which the sun never sets!—of the British *réveille* drum ever beating as our planet revolves on its axis, and day chases night round the globe!—what is that to the unending oblation of the Catholic Church? What moment is not a priest's voice uttering, *Te, igitur, clementissime Pater!* in the low tone which is heard in another sphere! What moment are not a priest's hands spread, dove-like, over the *oblata!* What moment—what moment is not counted by the bell which announces the silent and invisible coming of their God to prostrate adorers in some quiet sanctuary, in Europe, or in Asia, or in America, in the Atlantic cities, or the woods of Oregon, in the Alps, or on the Andes, on

the vast terra firma all along the meridians, or in the scattered islands of the sea!

It was into this vast fellowship, this society every where diffused and every where the same, (is not Popery every where the same?)—whether it were really the mystery of iniquity, the kingdom of Anti-christ, the mystic Babylon, the harlot sitting on many nations, or the kingdom of the Son of God, extending from the river to the ends of the earth, the Rock become a mountain and filling the whole earth, the true Zion, the immaculate Spouse of the Lamb;—it was into this society, so mysterious, and whose character, like that of its Founder, is the problem of ages—that Mary De Groot, for her weal or her woe, came to be initiated.

CHAPTER XII.

MRS. DOLMAN reappeared, and said that Father Smith would be ready in a few minutes. Then Sister Theresa came out, and approached the carriage window.

"Good morning, my dear Miss De Groot. Are you well? I feared you were not, from your non-appearance yesterday. Margaret is here too, I see! You adhere to your purpose? Well, Father Smith is now at the altar, my dear young friend, reciting the psalms of preparation."

Mary sank back in the carriage for a moment.

"I think you may come now," said the Sister.

Mary motioned to Alban to get out of the carriage. Her father followed. She herself, when she stood on

the pavement, seemed overcome, and was as pale as if she were going to faint. She leaned on Margaret.

"Shall I fetch a glass of water?" said Alban.

"No, no. I must not drink."

The thought revived her. It was in great part physical weakness from her three days' fast, which had told on a youthful frame. Sister Theresa and Margaret were obliged to support her in ascending the steps. On the last step she looked round for her father, who had slowly followed them.

"Forgive me, papa."

He was silent, and Mary added, "God is too good to me in allowing you to be present."

Mr. De Groot suddenly advanced and took her hand. He was aware that the time was come—the last moment in which he could exercise his parental right of preventing by force the action which was about to take place. Once his daughter had crossed the threshold of the church, and physical coercion was no longer a resource. He held her hand firmly, and gazed sternly on the rest. The door of the porch was held open at that moment by Mrs. Dolman; that of the chapel was already open, and a procession with lights approached from within.

"You must return home," said Mr. De Groot, with a fierce calmness.

The Sister's mild countenance expressed surprise; Margaret exclaimed; and the old woman's dark, skinny face, as the chapel lights fell upon it, was corrugated with indignation. Alban turned slightly away, when Mr. De Groot relinquished his daughter's hand as suddenly as he had seized it. His glance was directed to the door of the chapel, whither all instinctively turned. Somehow, in an outer minute all were collected within the porch, and the outer door had swung to upon them.

On the threshold of the chapel was a group composed as follows: On either side stood two young boys, with sweet, innocent countenances, robed in scarlet to the feet, over which they wore short, fine surplices. Each bore a lighted candle. In the midst of these stood a priest. His surplice was fine as lace; a magnificently-embroidered violet stole was laid over his shoulders, like a yoke of purple and gold, the beretta covered his head, a book was in his hand. His long, black habit was confined at the waist by a sash. To Alban all this was utterly strange;—as a picture, beautiful; but with difficulty regarded as the serious garb of religion. The scarlet cassocks of the boys reminded him of the Woman in the Revelations. Mr. De Groot's eye was fastened with evident recognition on the priest's countenance. Both he and

Alban involuntarily retired from Mary, who stood with Margaret, facing the clergyman. The Sister and Mrs. Dolman drew back on the opposite side. There was a moment's breathless silence, which was broken by the voice of the priest.

"What is thy name?"

"Mary," was the reply, in a voice somewhat faltering.

"*Mary*, what dost thou seek of the Church of God?"

"Faith."

"What doth faith give thee?"

"Eternal life," answered the postulant, in a firmer voice.

"If thou wilt have eternal life," said the priest, "keep the commandments. '*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*' But *Faith* is," he added, after finishing the text, "that thou worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost; but of these three the Substance is one, and one the Godhead. *Mary*, dost thou renounce Satan?"

"I renounce him," said Mary, reading, in a firm voice.

"And all his works?"

"I renounce them."

"And all his pomps?"

"I renounce them."

She gave the book to Margaret, as if no longer needing it. The priest interrogated her on the Apostles' Creed in a brief form, dividing it into three parts, to each of which the answer was, "I believe." Then he seemed to blow in her face thrice, saying in Latin and English, "Go out of her, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete." Beckoning her to approach, he breathed in her face, in the form of a cross, saying, "*Mary, receive by this insufflation the good spirit and the benediction of God. Pax tibi.*"

"*Et cum spiritu tuo,*" answered the boys with lights. Their young voices rung loud and clear, startlingly so.

Alban had never before witnessed any Catholic rite, had never stood even at the threshold of a Catholic church, or distinguished a Catholic priest. He naturally watched every movement, and listened to every word with closest attention. It would be giving him altogether too great a superiority to the

prejudices of education to suppose that these insufflations and the accompanying words did not appear to him superstitious. Mary stood near the clergyman, and Margaret had put back the hood of her mantle. He signed her with the sign of the cross.

"*Mary*, receive the sign of the cross as well in the forehead ✠ as in the breast ✠: receive the faith of the heavenly precepts: be such in manners that thou mayest now be the temple of God: and entering the Church of God, joyfully acknowledge thyself to have escaped the snares of death: abhor the Arian and Socinian perfidy; worship God, the Father Almighty, and Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who will come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire."

The surpliced boys said, "Amen."

"Let us pray," said the priest. The prayer spoke of God's handmaid Mary, now wandering, uncertain and doubtful, in the night of this world, and besought the Holy Lord, the Almighty Father, the Eternal God, to show her the way of truth and of the acknowledgment of Himself, that the eyes of her heart being unsealed, she might recognise Him, one God, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, with the Holy Ghost, and reap the fruit of that confession both here and in the world to come; and

Atherton perceived that Mary was considered as still unacquainted with God. But the rite rapidly proceeded.

The priest signed the candidate with the sign of the cross in her forehead, and on several other places, saying,

“I sign thy forehead ✠ that thou mayest receive the cross of the Lord. I sign thine ears ✠ that thou mayest hear the divine precepts. I sign thine eyes ✠ that thou mayest see the Brightness of God. I sign thy nostrils ✠ that thou mayest perceive the odour of the sweetness of Christ. I sign thy mouth ✠ that thou mayest speak the words of life. I sign thy breast ✠ that thou mayest believe in God. I sign thy shoulders ✠ that thou mayest receive the yoke of his service. I sign thee all, in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy Ghost ✠, that thou mayest have eternal life, and live for ever and ever.”

Then the priest rapidly recited several Latin prayers, of which the purport was that this “Elect one, this handmaid of God, might be kept by the power of the Lord’s cross, and the efficacy of His mercy, so that from the rudiments of faith to which she had now been called, she might proceed day by day till she could fitly approach the grace of Bap-

tism, arrive at the glory of regeneration, and what she could not obtain by nature, rejoice to have received by grace," always through Christ our Lord. And now followed a very superstitious part of this strange ceremony—the blessing and exorcism of salt, which one of the innocent-looking surpliced boys gravely presented in a silver vessel. The priest read a long Latin prayer, interspersed with ever so many crossings. We translate, that our readers, before they unawares adopt it, may see what a singular religion the Catholic is.

"I exorcise thee, creature of salt, in the name of God the Father ✠ Almighty, and in the charity of our Lord Jesus ✠ Christ, and in the virtue of the Holy ✠ Ghost. I exorcise thee by the living God ✠, by the Holy God ✠, by the God ✠ who created thee for the safeguard of mankind, and commanded thee to be consecrated by his servants for the people coming to the simplicity of faith, that in the name of the Holy Trinity thou mayest be made a salutary sacrament to put the enemy to flight. Therefore we ask of thee, Lord our God, that sanctifying thou wouldst sanctify ✠, and blessing thou wouldst bless ✠, this creature of salt, that it may become to all who receive it a perfect medicine, abiding in their entrails, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who

shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and the world by fire."

And the priest put some of the salt on the tongue of the young catechumen, adding, "*Mary*, receive the salt of wisdom: be it a propitiation to thee unto eternal life." More Latin prayers followed, to the effect that the God of their fathers, the Author of all truth, would look upon His handmaid, *Mary*, and as she had "tasted that first food of salt, not permit her longer to thirst, but bring her to the laver of regeneration."

"Elect one, pray. Bend the knee, and say, *Our Father*."

And *Mary* knelt before the priest and said the Lord's Prayer.

"Rise. Finish thy prayer and say, *Amen*."

"*Amen*," (*rising*.)

"Sign her," said the priest to *Margaret* — and *Margaret* signed *Mary* on the forehead, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And then followed the strangest prayer of all, or rather, a series of prayers and adjurations, rising like the fearful note which shall prepare for the last regeneration. It was awful to hear in that poor porch. The priest lifted his hand over her head.

"God of Heaven, God of Earth, God of Angels,

God of Archangels, God of Patriarchs, God of Prophets, God of Apostles, God of Martyrs, God of Confessors, God of Virgins, God of all that live well, God, to whom every tongue confesses, and every knee bends, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings: I invoke Thee, Lord, upon this Thy handmaid *Mary*, that Thou wouldst deign to keep her, and bring her to the grace of Thy baptism. Through Christ our Lord."

"*Amen*," was the voice of the young light-bearers.

"Therefore, cursed devil, recognise thy sentence, and give honour to the true and living God; give honour to Jesus Christ, his Son, and to the Holy Ghost; and depart from this handmaid of God, *Mary*; for God and our Lord Jesus Christ has deigned to call her to His holy grace and to the font of baptism, and this sign of the holy cross ✠, which we give her in the forehead, do thou, cursed devil, never dare to violate. By the same Christ our Lord, who will come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire."

"*Amen*," they replied.

"Pray, Elect one. Bend the knee and say, *Our Father*."

And Mary knelt before the priest, and said the Lord's Prayer.

"Rise. Finish thy prayer and say, *Amen*."

"*Amen*," (*rising*.)

And the priest said to Margaret, "Sign her," and to the Elect, "Approach;" and Margaret signed her forehead, completing the invitation in the name of the Trinity. And the priest once more raised his hand over her head. It was a prayer to the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who appeared to Moses in Sinai, and brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, deputing to them the Angel of his pity to guard them day and night, that He would deign to send His holy Angel from Heaven to guard this His handmaid, *Mary*, and bring her to the grace of Baptism, through Christ our Lord."

And the light-bearers said, "*Amen*."

"Pray, Elect one. Bend the knee and say, *Our Father*."

And it was all done the third time. At the end, the priest, with his hand still lifted over her head, said,

"I exorcise thee, unclean spirit, by the Father ✠, and the Son ✠, and the Holy Ghost ✠, that thou mayest go out and depart from this handmaid of God, *Mary*. For HE commands thee, cursed, damned one, who opened the eyes of the born blind, and raised Lazarus on the fourth day from the tomb.

"Therefore, cursed devil, recognise thy sentence,

and give honour to the true and living God, give honour to Jesus Christ His Son, and to the Holy Ghost, and depart from this handmaid of God, *Mary*; for God and our Lord Jesus Christ has deigned to call her to His holy grace and to the font of Baptism, and this sign of the holy cross ✠, which we place on her forehead, do thou, cursed devil, never dare to violate. By the same Christ our Lord, who will come to judge the quick and the dead, and the world by fire."

And the boys still answered, "*Amen.*"

He raised his hand over the head of the catechumen once more — yes, once more — and said, as she bowed before him, "Let us pray."

"I entreat thy eternal and most just pity, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, Author of light and truth, upon this thy handmaid, *Mary*, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to illuminate her with the light of the intelligence proceeding from thee: cleanse and sanctify her: give her the true science, that she may be made worthy to approach the grace of thy Baptism, hold a firm hope, a right counsel, a holy doctrine, that she may be fit to receive thy grace. Through Christ our Lord."

And those boys in scarlet and fine linen answered, as before, "*Amen.*"

He gave the end of the violet stole into her

hand, and said, "*Mary*, enter into the holy Church of God, that thou mayest receive the heavenly benediction from the Lord Jesus Christ, and have part with Him and His saints."

Rapid in comparison was the remainder of the rite, of which the mere preparations had been so long, and, one may say, tedious. Many are the steps of the Temple, and its porch is many-columned and deep; but once you have entered the gate—crossed the threshold—and the pure light shines, the cleansing water flows in a perennial stream. Holding the priest's stole, *Mary* entered the church, and, taught by the Sister, (for all accompanied her,) fell upon her knees and adored, touching the chapel floor with her oft-signed brow. She rose, and now recited with the priest the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer. He imposed or held his hand again over her head. It was another exorcism, but he signed her not again with the cross in pronouncing it. It reminded Satan of the day of judgment at hand, the day of everlasting punishment, the day which should come as a burning oven, in which everlasting destruction was prepared for him and all his angels. It bade him, therefore, "damned one, and to be damned hereafter," give honour, as before, to the living God, the eternal Trinity, in whose name and

power he was commanded, whoever he was, impure spirit, "to go out and depart from this handmaid of God, *Mary*, whom to-day the same God and our Lord Jesus Christ had deigned to call by a gift, to His holy grace and benediction, and to the font of Baptism, that she might become His temple by the water of regeneration for the remission of sins;" concluding by the ever-recurring adjuration, "In the name of the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire."

With saliva from his tongue the priest touched her right and left ear, saying, "*Ephpheta*,—that is, be opened,"—and her nostrils, "Unto the odour of sweetness; but thou, devil, fly, for the judgment of God is at hand."

Once more he demands, "What is thy name?"

"*Mary*," said the young Elect, pale and faint in the midst of her friends, yet unsupported, though Margaret stood near.

"*Mary*, dost thou renounce Satan?"

"I renounce him."

"And all his works, and all his pomps?"

"I renounce them."

The holy oil of catechumens stood in a small vessel on a table, and the priest anointed her there-

with on the breast and on the shoulders, as she bowed before him, temporarily unmantled.

"I anoint thee with the oil of salvation," he said, "in Christ Jesus our Lord, unto eternal life."

"*Amen.*"

"Peace to thee."

"*Et cum spiritu tuo,*" was the unwearied response.

"*Go out, impure spirit,*" added the priest, drying with a napkin the places which he had anointed, "and give place to the living and true God. *Fly, impure spirit,* and give place to Jesus Christ, His Son. *Depart, impure spirit,* and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete."

And now they drew around the font itself, which was opened, and a silver vessel brought to receive the excess of the hallowed waters. The priest removed his violet stole, and assumed one of white silk, but richly embroidered, like the other. In laying aside the one, he kissed it; he kissed the other in putting it on.

"What is thy name?" he demanded once more of the trembling handmaid of the Lord.

"Mary."

The reply was low, but quite clear.

"*Mary,* dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth?"

"I believe."

"Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born and suffered?"

"I believe."

"Dost thou believe also in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and life everlasting?"

"I believe."

"*Mary*, what seekest thou?"

"Baptism."

"Wilt thou be baptized?"

"I will."

The veil was removed from her head, and the mantle from her shoulders, by the females. Mary bowed before the font, with head and neck and shoulders bare, her hands crossed on her bosom. Margaret held her arm; and the priest, taking water in a silver vessel from the font, poured it on her head thrice, in the form of a cross, saying once,

"*Maria*, Ego te baptizo in nomine Patris ✠, et Filii ✠, et Spiritus ✠ Sancti."

No one said *Amen*, but he touched his finger immediately in the sacred chrism which stood by the side of the oil of catechumens, and anointed her head in the form of a cross, saying,

"Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath regenerated thee of water and the Holy Ghost, and Who hath given thee remission of all sins, Himself anoint thee with the chrism of salvation ✠, in the same Christ Jesus, our Lord, unto eternal life."

"Amen."

"Peace be to thee."

"And with thy spirit."

He put on her head the white chrismal.

"Receive a garment white and spotless, which thou mayest bear before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life."

"Amen."

He gave her a lighted candle of virgin wax which was brought by the dark-robed Sister. It was a noble-looking, gray-haired man who gave it, and then drew back into shadow.

"Receive a burning lamp, and keep thy baptism without reproach; keep the commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to the marriage, thou mayest meet Him in the celestial mansion unto life eternal."

"Amen."

"Mary, go in peace, and the Lord be with thee."

"Amen."

The surpliced boys, with their candles and scarlet robes, turned about to depart from the chapel, and the priest prepared to follow them: but ere he departed, Father Smith, bending down, said to her, in a low voice, — not the voice of a priest in the office, but his own, — “Pray for me.” Margaret kissed her hand, which still held the burning candle, and said, in a sobbing whisper, “Oh, pray for me.” — Sister Theresa approached in tears, and said, “Pray for me, Mary,” and kissed her. “Pray for me, I entreat you. Pray for the sisters of our society.” One or two old women, who had been kneeling on the chapel floor, hobbled up and whispered, “Pray for us.” One said — “Oh that it was me, if I might die the next minute!”

But there was another sacrament to be received. The Sister took the candle from her; the veil was thrown again over her head. In a minute she was kneeling at the rails of the altar of the Virgin in the same chapel, where the candles were already lit, a little table stood prepared with the holy chrism, and the old ecclesiastic, whose mass she had heard every morning at seven, was sitting with a mitre on his head, and a priest for his assistant. In two or three minutes the bishop had confirmed her, had smitten her sinless cheek to teach her to bear hardship for

Christ, and given her peace and a blessing. While she yet, lost and overpowered, thanked God for this second grace—the gift of the Holy Ghost Himself—and prayed for those who had asked her prayers, Sister Theresa put the candle again in her hand, and made her go into the church to hear mass. She knelt between the Sister and Margaret, who offered their communion for her. Mary listened to the mass of the Epiphany, (for it was the octave,) familiar to her from having heard it already twice. The gospels, of course, were the same as at that Christmas mass when she was converted, although their relative position was reversed. She heard them now with the white veil of confirmation on her head, with the lighted candle of the neophyte in her hand. Again, as on Christmas morn, she adored with the wise men, but it was as one who had found the Saviour in the House of Bread; again she bent the knee in honour of the Word made Flesh, but it was as one who had received power to become the Child of God.

“ Ecce Agnus Dei ! Ecce qui tollit peccata mundi ! ”

It came upon her before she was aware. The Author of sanctity reposed in a bosom made whiter than snow by his Blood. Love Incarnate sought and folded in Its divine embrace a creature purified by the divine love animating the creaturely heart,

and effacing all its human stains. What joy, what peace, what purity on purity, and grace on grace, did He not impart in that kiss of communion! in the touch, though under a veil, of that life-giving and immaculate Flesh which has ascended to the Father!

"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for thy breasts are better than wine."

Her father and Alban witnessed the communion from a pew not far distant, where both patiently waited until the newly received convert had finished her thanksgiving. The bishop was in the vestry when the party passed through, returning to their carriage. He wished to speak to the young convert, who knelt for his blessing.

"My dear *demoiselle*," said the purple-vested old man, mingling French words with English, and speaking the latter language with some accent, "you are fasting, you must be exhausted. Do not return home without some refreshment. Come into my poor house with your friends, and take a cup of coffee, I pray you."

"You are very good, *monseigneur*," replied Mr. De Groot, speaking for his daughter, "but our carriage waits, as well as the breakfast at my house, and I therefore beg your lordship to excuse us."

"As you please, sir. I should be sorry if this young lady suffered any inconvenience. God bless you, my child. I thank Him for this auspicious day, in which He has been so good to you, and has consoled all our hearts by your faith. Pray for me."

The bishop and ecclesiastics made a courteous and very foreign reverence to the strangers, which Mr. De Groot, who was not to be outdone in politeness, returned in the most formal manner of the old court. When they got into the street, Alban had some difficulty in realizing that he was in New York.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAY after day of the vacation passed, and our hero became better acquainted with all the persons he had met, with some of them almost intimately. There was Van Brugh, who took a great fancy to him—a dangerous predilection, chiefly to our hero's interior. They met in a chess-room, much frequented then by young idlers, and which an enterprising barber, who, to his misfortune, had a taste and was vain of it, had fitted up with pictures and divans, and elegant chess-tables, hoping to be reimbursed by the coffee, segars and wines that should be called for by the devotees of the royal game. There was Mr. Clinton—Alban called upon him to arrange a seat in church for Miss De Groot, at her

father's request — and from him he learned that there was a discipline in existence designed to fortify man against himself, and a treasure of grace accessible to all, by the aid of which even youth, if it would, might perfectly triumph. Thus his bane and antidote were both before him; for Livingston's philosophy, founded on a wide experience of life, was just the reverse of this.

He used to see Mr. Clinton every day, for the latter (greatly interested in the gentle-mannered and thoughtful student) never omitted giving him an excuse to call again. And when Alban went away, Mr. Clinton would say, "Pray, go up to the drawing-room and see the ladies; and if you have an opportunity of speaking to my daughter on these topics — since they interest you — I wish you would."

In truth he always found Miss Clinton in the drawing-room — not always her mother. She was extremely agreeable — more so than he had ever known Miss Ellsworth; for with the same affability, she had seen so many things abroad that were interesting to a young man. Her temper was imperturbable, in which she had also the advantage of Mary De Groot; and instead of treating our hero like Miss Seixas, as a youth whom she was bound to amuse, she appeared to look up to him, listening with ad-

miring respect to every thing he said on the religious and moral topics, on which he was stronger than on any other; and, in fine, entered into Alban completely, just as he was, conforming herself to him, not attempting to mould him to herself. Mary De Groot had an inward position of her own, from which there was no moving her. Her mind worked, and her heart glowed, independently. Some how, although this excited and interested Alban, it made him often uncomfortable. There are moments when a man likes to float along with the stream, even of an inferior nature; and Henrietta floated right long with him, wherever he would. She merely undertook to improve his manners in some small particulars, reformed his French pronunciation, imparted to him several secrets of etiquette, such as young men in society need to know, and taught him, with her own fair fingers, how to tie his cravat.

As for the De Groots, he visited them in the evening; he was always sure to see the parents as well as the daughter, and they had ever a pleasant social time. Alban was not long in perceiving that Mr. De Groot was even more anxious for his visits than before Mary's baptism; which might be partly owing to the feeling of estrangement, or at least of reserve, that had arisen between father and daughter

in consequence of that event; but partly (the young man conjectured so much from expressions let fall by the patroon) was due to a fear that the young lady might, as the next step, think of what she seemed never to think of—a convent.

None of these feelings, however, appeared on the surface of these agreeable reunions. You never would have supposed that of those four persons, one was a Pantheist, one a bigoted Presbyterian, one a devout convert to the Catholic Church, and one something between a Deist and a Jew. They generally played whist, after which Mary De Groot went to the piano. Her style was exactly suited to charm a domestic circle like that, patient yet flowing, and delightfully accurate, without too much vigour; her singing, a full-breasted, smooth warble, negligent of petty ornament, and delighting in pure, simple effects. Alban always appeared very manly, and was more attentive to Mrs. De Groot than to Mary.

One morning of this week, our hero did not go up to see the ladies at the end of his now daily call on Mr. Clinton, and the next day he was just escaping in a similar manner, when Miss Clinton looked over the stairs, and invited him to come up. They were to give a party that evening, and she wanted him to look at the rooms. Alban had

found before, that once up stairs with Miss Clinton, what with her music, what with her chat, the books of prints, the drawing-room knick-knacks, the stories of Paris, and of Rome, and such like, it was difficult to get away under a couple of hours. If he determined in himself to go sooner than that, it always happened that Miss Clinton began to talk about Mary De Groot, and that was sure to detain him. It appeared that there was never a young lady who had a higher or more enthusiastic opinion of another, than Miss Henrietta Clinton had of our heroine. Miss Clinton was herself not insensible to the poetry of Catholicity:—she had loved, when abroad, to visit the churches at the witching hour of twilight, had listened with rapture to the singing of nuns in convent chapels, and with tears to the *Miserere* of Allegri in the Sistine. Even confession, of which she had spoken with so animated a dislike on one occasion, when Alban observed that it was one of the things which were most attractive to him in the Catholic Church, and in which it seemed to possess the greatest practical superiority over other churches, — even confession, she acknowledged, might be a consoling privilege in certain circumstances. Then her great difficulty was Transubstantiation; but when Alban said that he could

as soon believe that as the Incarnation, and that one mystery naturally led the mind to expect another, she declared she could easily believe in the Real Presence, and described to him the beautiful ceremonies of *Corpus Christi* in Italy.

It somehow seemed to Alban as if Miss Clinton's ready acquiescence in all these things made him doubt their truth.

And, by the by, what did Miss Clinton's mother think of these long morning calls? Once only did Mrs. Clinton come up from her beloved basement, while Alban was in the drawing-room with her daughter, and her opinion of the youth was expressed afterwards in the following terms, which it would have flattered him to hear.

"How you must be bored, Henrietta!"

"Only amused, ma!"

"Amused! what on earth can you find amusing in him! I can understand how that pert little Mary De Groot likes such a solemn, dreamy piece, but I should think he would drive *you* crazy."

"So he does," observed the daughter laughing, "and that is just what I like. But he is a very good young man."

"I sha'n't take the trouble to come up stairs again for him," said Mrs. Clinton, seriously.

"Pray, don't, ma!" answered Henrietta, with a laugh.

Mrs. Clinton did not reflect that the conversation of young Atherton might be a great deal more animated and interesting in her absence, than when she was by, to watch every word he said. And so on the day when Miss Clinton called Alban to come up and look at the rooms, all arranged for the party in the evening, he found the young lady, as usual, alone. At the end of an hour he pleaded an engagement and wished her good morning.

"Good morning," said Miss Clinton, who was seated on a sofa, netting a purse. But just as he reached the door, she added, "Oh! Mr. Atherton, there is one question that I really wanted to ask you."

Alban came slowly back, and stood, hat in hand, brushing the nap with his glove.

"No, I am ashamed to detain you when you have an appointment," said she; "I will ask you another time."

"If it is not going to keep me long," said Alban.

"Oh! really it is of so little consequence. You have been all over Mr. De Groot's house, I believe, Mr. Atherton?"

"Yes," said Alban.

"It is very beautiful—is n't it? Really, it quite

reminded me of the Colonna Palace — that *coup d'œil* down the rooms. But you are standing, Mr. Atherton."

Alban seated himself on the edge of a chair, still slowly smoothing the nap of his shiny hat, as if waiting for Miss Clinton's question.

"I was going to ask you — what was I going to ask? — I declare, mentioning Mr. De Groot's house has driven it out of my head."

"I thought, from your manner of introducing it, that your question had something to do with his house," replied Alban, innocently.

"So it had. Now I remember," said Miss Clinton, putting down her purse. "Mr. De Groot's house reminds me so much of the palaces in Rome. Of course, you know, they are much larger and more imposing, and all that. And the gallery is not to be named in the same breath with one of those in Rome. But still, it reminds me of them."

"I am no judge, but I should think it might."

"Well, I was going to say that those palaces in Rome, you know, with all their fine pictures and works of art, were built, and the treasures in them collected, by cardinals and popes, and left to their families. Now, how is that, Mr. Atherton? Does it look right that the popes and cardinals should be so

rich, and make such a use of their money? Ought they not to be poor, like our Saviour and the Apostles?"

While Alban was explaining this to Miss Clinton's satisfaction, another hour slipped away, and the conversation was at last broken off by some green-house people coming with flowers and plants to finish the decoration of the showy saloons. Mrs. Clinton came, too, to oversee the work, and our hero retreated, not without some confusion and awkwardness, at having stayed till he was fairly driven away.

We do not care to dwell on it, but these interviews, coming upon the conversations of Van Brugh, (who entertained and expressed a very slighting opinion of Miss Clinton,) and perhaps recalling associations with her Christian name, threw a strange light into unsuspected hollows in our hero's heart. Strange images would rise up out of those nooks, and flit before his mental eye, like bats in the dusk. Not that they looked like bats to him. They had, on the contrary, a beauty from which he could with difficulty avert his gaze; they had soft, seductive faces; their flowing hair was like the hair of women; their forms were female to the waist; and all the rest was lost in a drapery of fiery mist.

But such was the constitution of Atherton's mind,

or, perhaps, such was the habitual bent of his will, that every little internal experience of this kind, as it convinced him of the frailty inherent in his moral powers, made him turn more eagerly *somewhere* for that supernatural aid, in which the religion of his childhood had apparently disappointed him. If Henrietta's ready acquiescence in his yet vague notions made the Catholic Church itself seem unreal, her dangerous coquetry made it seem a necessity.

On this particular day, after leaving the Clintons, he strode over to the Avenue, but, avoiding the house, went round to the stables. Mr. De Groot had kindly placed one of his horses at his disposal to use whenever he liked. He had been out twice with Mary and her father; but to-day he ordered (for the first time) the said trotter to be saddled only for himself. An impetuous, solitary ride intimated pretty plainly that the young man had something within to be subdued, to be reconciled, perhaps to be elevated and purified. Alban was used to riding, and passionately fond of it, especially alone. Nothing stimulated his imagination so much. He could never think so vigorously as on horseback. The air of his native island, the fine, slightly-cultivated country, copse and meadow, thick wood, expanse of waters, and here and there, off the road, an old, quiet, rural house, overlooking the latter,

refreshed his spirit while they cooled the current of his youthful blood — long and vainly taught to flow in the sober channel of Puritan discipline.

This perplexed conflict between education and nature — the ardent, impassioned and imaginative youth struggling in the bonds of a narrow system which could neither satisfy nor repress his genial temperament — was a thing quite overlooked by our hero's masculine acquaintance; but such a girl as Miss Clinton got some glimpse of it, and perhaps the same might be said of others of his female friends. But none of them knew, or could have even imagined, the extravagance of fancy with which his reveries avenged his daily life. Neither America nor Europe offered a suitable scene for this frenzied internal activity. The furthest East, and Asia alone, could satisfy his imperious imagination; and in this there was at least one advantage, that Alban indulged in none of the sordid dreams for which a nearer scene would have afforded materials. So when he came back to actual life, he was as simple and disinterested in fact, as in appearance he was modest and unassuming. We who are behind the scenes, know how far he was entitled to the credit of these last-mentioned qualities, and perhaps as we proceed, shall discover it more plainly yet.

Returning, this Thursday afternoon, from his soli-

tary ride, and skirting the fine (but then leafless) woods where the old Lorillard mansion (now the Convent of the *Sacré Cœur*) commands a view of both rivers, at the base of the hill he overtook a carriage containing two ladies. They were his Jewish friends. He had passed them going out, but at the New York trotting pace of a mile in two minutes and forty seconds, which certainly gave no time for recognition.

"You went by us like lightning. I was very much afraid for *you*," said Mrs. Seixas, in a foreign accent.

"When you go to the East, you will ride an Arab," said Miriam, eyeing with admiration the black, wild-eyed horse, with fiercely curving neck, which Alban rode.

"And wield a Damascus scimitar instead of this,"—waving his riding-whip.

"Exactly."

"We always rode donkeys at Smyrna," observed Mrs. Seixas. "They are safer, and none but Turks and Franks are allowed to ride horses in the East."

"Do you go to Mrs. Clinton's party to-night?" asked Miriam, reddening.

"Of course. Is not the whole world to be there?"

"I have heard so," replied Miriam, with a smile. "What is called the whole world in this corner of it."

"We shall be great people," said Mrs. Seixas — "I mean at Mrs. Clinton's party: — for we are to take with us a real Count, Mr. Atherton, who has brought letters of credit and introduction to my husband, from Baron Rothschild, at Vienna."

"I expect the Count to fall in love with your beautiful Miss De Groot," said Miriam: "for, like her, he is a Catholic."

After this conversation our hero took his way back to the Avenue and Mr. De Groot's stables, in a still deeper revery. And, by the by, we have forgot to mention that he and Mary De Groot, at her father's requisition, kept the appointment with Miss Seixas, on the Saturday previous, to visit the synagogue. Mr. De Groot had invited Alban to breakfast after the baptism, and afterwards insisted on sending them both in his own carriage to fulfil the engagement made with the young Jewess. Thus much it may be well to state; but the reflections which Alban made on that occasion, while witnessing the ancient rite at which our Saviour assisted when on earth, and the conversation which passed between Miriam and the young Christian lady in the women's gallery, although both might be interesting to some, we have concluded to omit, that we may hurry on towards our catastrophe.

CHAPTER XIV.

By nine o'clock that part of Broadway where the fashionable Mrs. Clinton's basement house displayed its illuminated windows, was a regular lock of carriages. The guests, as they were set down, ascended to the bedrooms—gay with French upholstery and bright as day with tapers—to lay aside their outer wrappings. In the room allotted to the darker sex, Alban found Mr. De Groot, who immediately said—“You have no young lady with you, of course? Well, you must take down Mary. Let us go into the hall as soon as you are ready, and wait for them.”

While they waited, (Alban trying to button his white gloves, and feeling as nervous as might be

expected,) Miss Clinton, so beautifully dressed that he did not recognise her, came out of the ladies' toilet room, and after a glance at the group of gentlemen, singled him out by name, saying, "Mary wants you," and bade him follow her. He did so, and she reëntered the apartment whence she came, parting the fair throng within. Here, a bevy of damsels were admiring their toilets and figures in a *psyche*; there, one was adjusting her ringlets before the toilet-glass; in one corner, a prudent girl was exchanging the thicker *chaussure*, with which it was deemed best to be protected in stepping from the carriage to the door, for the satin slippers appropriate for dancing; and there was a slight movement of apprehension and displeasure at the entrance of a young man; but it was to tie Miss De Groot's slipper — an office which the young lady, already gloved, with her bouquet, tablets and fan in hand, seemed expecting from some one, but not from him, to judge by her ready blush. In a moment, however, at Miss Clinton's bidding, he had knelt at her feet, thanking all his stars for the happy chance which made that narrow ribbon come untied. He was not used to tying ladies' slippers, his modesty was in his way, and the beauty all around confused him; he blundered, and the young ladies tittered; Mary, with angry promptitude, turned away from him, and took her foot

upon her knee, to tie the slipper herself; but Alban looked so mortified, that, with a forced laugh, she bade him try again, directing him how to cross the ties, and inserting her finger (for the glove was already off) in the knot as he secured it. When done, she quickly dropped her foot and dress, and took his arm, with a rosy defiance. What Miss Clinton did it for, and why she looked so pleased as the youth and maiden went down the stairs together, following Mary's father and mother, we, for our part, cannot imagine.

This is one of the incidents which some people blame. Forsooth it is a position—not but it has occurred a thousand times—which must not be described on paper. Why not? In other words, we are not to go into society, and take things as we find them, and trace the effect of probable and natural incidents upon the human heart! But by your leave, I mean to do so, if all the bigots and prudes in the world say nay. There is nothing in it which is not simple, modest, and characteristic of the beautiful person to whom it occurred. Her behaviour was beautiful, too, because it was natural, unaffected, girlish, innocent, and tender.

'Tis a hard case if the traits of Nature are to be abandoned to the pencil that works with an ill intent, while the moralist who would teach the weak-

ness of the best of men, and the true source of strength for all, must shrink from the delineation of her wild and varied charms. But these people really condemn fiction—that mighty instrument—the instructress of the people—in which wisdom gives its most prevailing lessons—which has created a world of ideal beings, for the sake of immortalizing all that is instructive and delightful in the real world that perishes day by day! They condemn fiction, I say, and its new spiritual sphere they do not comprehend at all. The psychological romance is the creation of a few native writers, of whom the wizard, Hawthorne, is easily the chief. Humblest of them all, (as *he* is the mightiest,) it is our especial glory to describe the interior history of the youthful soul, from the stand-point of the immemorial faith of Catholic Christendom. The time will come when thoughtful spirits shall do us justice.

The rooms below were crowded. Mary hung on her friend's arm, while a brilliant mass of both sexes flowed and retired through the folding-doors like the moon-lit tide through a water-gate. Her mien was embarrassed—not exactly because it was her first ball, for we have seen that she had, when she chose, a formed society manner, native as her graceful carriage, a matter of birth and early habit, before reflec-

tion could come in to inspire doubt or diffidence; but she was an object of universal and inquisitive attention. People stared and people whispered. Some faces expressed pity; some, horror, which even her beauty and extreme youth did not prevent; some, contemptuous curiosity. After all, such a beau as Ather-ton, unknown as he was, was some protection, even to the daughter of Mr. De Groot, under these circumstances; and it was an additional relief that attention was soon diverted to her dress, although she was not arrayed in that pure white muslin, so effective and distinguishing, which your heroines always wear at the balls which are given in novels.

"Let your dress," said her director, "be such as becomes a Christian maiden, who has something dearer in view than to dazzle the senses of those who behold her."

Mary understood him without difficulty, for these things are among the minor morals of young ladies, a frequent theme of discussion among themselves, and the advice of Father Smith but gave force to her own idea of right. When her dress came home accordingly, she did not ask whether after all there could be any harm in being *decolletée* so slightly, at her tender age; but having plenty of the stuff, with her own ready fingers, — sitting up half one night for the

purpose, — she made what she was sure even her father confessor would allow to be a decent *corsage*. In those days young ladies did not affect the vapoury tulles and other gossamer robes which are now the rage for dancing parties. A pink lutestring, changeable with white, which, in the evening, had a silvery sheen, extremely youthful and brilliant in effect, was the simple ball-dress of the wealthy patroon's daughter. The most modest of her school-frocks had served her for a pattern; but for the sleeve, which proved unmanageable, she substituted a little lace ruffle; it had the most ingenuous air possible; and many a damsel, with a robe half off her shoulders, envied that innocent toilette.

But had Mary's father been a gentleman of moderate means, however pretty and innocent she might have been, we do not say but that she would have been driven to the wall. That could not happen to the only child and heiress of the great Mr. De Groot. There were fashionable Catholics enow, even in New York society, to take a convert of such expectations quite eagerly by the hand. And here come Mrs. Washington Lynch and two or three Catholic ladies more, the gayest people in town, and Mrs. Lynch the best-dressed woman, seeking an introduction to Miss De Groot. Mary is separated from Alban. "Isn't she a love?" she hears whispered now around

her. Tall, elegant youths bow before her; her beauty is telling upon these, and upon the male portion of the company in general; her modest garb inspires respect, and something more, (for mystery sends a surer dart than her bare-necked rival;) her own spirit rises; she determines to carry off her position bravely; she begins to use her tiny gold pencil; and by the time the quadrille is formed, has more engagements on her tablets than the whole evening would suffice to fulfil. Alban's name was first; he had the advantage of asking her on the stairs: he was very proud, and Mary laughed as they took their places.

"Dancing was a religious exercise among the Hebrews, I believe. You, I take for granted, mean to practise it with devotion."

"Hang the Hebrews!" thought Alban. "Miss Seixas is opposite us," he observed, "and we shall have the pleasure of seeing her dance."

"What a very distinguished partner she has!" replied Mary, maliciously. "Who can it be?"

"By his decoration and yellow moustaches, the German Count of whom they spoke to me."

"How incongruous," exclaimed Mary, "for a Christian knight — all starred and crossed — to be dancing with a Jewess! She and I ought to change partners, by rights."

And it soon appeared that the Count danced better than any body; it made him more distinguished even for a Count. It was beautiful to see him — now with his partner, now with his *vis-à-vis*. Miriam's grand and plastic style has been described, and a quadrille in those days admitted, though it did not require, the display of it. But Mary De Groot — a girl all over, and excited by the rivalry — danced, as she sung, with faultless accuracy, which was made beautiful by her gay manner, just checked by modesty, bearing her head with a rose-like grace, and her arms like wreathed lilies over her silver drapery. The Count, attending to all her movements with foreign gravity, appreciated her finely. She praised, to Alban, his thorough-bred respect. They exchanged courteous French phrases as they touched their gloved fingers. Alban, on his part, flirted as much as he could with Miss Seixas, who gave him every encouragement in her power.

The quadrille yields to its German rival. The Count waltzed with the daughter of the house, the fair Henrietta, and Alban, who had never seen waltzing before, looked on, shocked but fascinated. Miss Clinton's dress was a novelty (she brought it from Paris) — white tulle, countless folds confined apparently by a silver girdle, over a rich white silk, and

looped up with flowers. It flew behind her like a white cloud.

After all, the waltz was a beautiful dance. As Mary De Groot said to Alban, the music was so pretty. The Count took out Miss Seixas. If ever, it was now unobjectionable, from the magic of art. Every other sentiment of the beholder was swallowed up in admiration. Waltzer after waltzer joined the circling pairs, like birds rising from a copse. Alban looked round at last for Mary, but she was gone. He observed with a pang, for which he could not account, that Miriam accepted every invitation; and after watching her for some time with strangely blended feelings, upon Van Brugh's taking her out, he turned away, and went in search of the mistress to whom, as he felt, he owed all his devotion. She was no waltzer.

But why not? Why not waltz, sir, pray? Waltzing, indeed, is dead, but has left a child in its own image and likeness, only, like the rising generation in general, saucier than its parent. Why not waltz, and why not polk? I do assure you, sir, that it is a choice between the polka, and being a wall-flower; for nothing else is danced now: it is all the young men care for. And the music, sir, as you confess, is so much prettier — at, least, the waltzes were beau-

tiful. Why should you object so strongly—*you* of all men—who write such strange things, that I declare I am afraid I do wrong to read this very book? I am afraid that ‘after all’ (as you say) you are only an hypocritical Tartuffe!

My dear Miss —, how you misunderstand me! *I* affect to abridge your innocent enjoyment! I who have gone almost too far in the recoil from those unnatural solemnities and impossible restraints which some people would fain impose upon society, and the only effect of which would be to make young people hypocrites, or reckless! I who have vindicated dancing as necessary to the cheerfulness and decency of social intercourse in every Christian country, and have told people plainly that if they banished it, the inevitable consequence of all monkish morality would inevitably follow—that the candour of youth would fly with its gayety: not that the true and wise monastics ever countenanced any such absurdity as to convert the counsels of perfection into rules of secular life. Nay, I allow that waltzing is not a sin, and that it has been very innocently practised by very pure-minded persons; and I would be willing, like a wise sovereign pressed by cries for revolution, to compromise by permitting the waltz on condition that the detestable polka were banished.

But please to consider that what is tolerated in society for good reasons, is not necessarily approved for every individual. There must be much in the world that is exceedingly pleasant, and not precisely sinful, which those who would seriously imitate their Saviour, and tread in the footsteps of the Saints, must deny themselves. Mary De Groot was a soul under guidance, and seeking its perfection. Surely it is enough that she was allowed and encouraged to comply with her parent's wishes and her own innocent inclination, by attending a ball, and dancing as often as she was asked, and as long as she could stand, with the slight exception of one especially fascinating dance, which is admitted to be a dangerous one, and which even judicious men of the world have condemned.

It is true that the spectators run more risk than the performers in these exhibitions, but that only strengthens the argument, by adding the motive of charity to the neighbour to that of charity to one's self, in favour of abstinence from the perilous pleasure. I know that "Lady Alice" waltzed, and polked too (I am sorry to say); but in the first place, Lady Alice was not Mary De Groot, and in the next place, if she had been her exact fellow in disposition, her example concludes nothing, you know, since she was

not a Catholic at all, but only a poor deluded little Puseyite.

Alban found Mary in a corner of one of the other rooms, with the Count; Henrietta was retiring from them, and looking back. .

"I do not waltz, sir," said Mary.

"You waltz not, mademoiselle? *Alors, il faut commencer.* But Miss Clinton assures me that you waltz extremely well."

"I have not waltzed since I left school, monsieur."

"*C'est à dire*—a week ago, mademoiselle. These are quite ideas *de pension*, I assure you."

He pleaded with so much grace and good humour that it seemed ridiculous to refuse him. Miss De Groot laughed. He even intimated that nothing could show off that charming classic style of costume but the attitude and movement of the waltz. He managed her as a gentle knight does a spirited but timid filly.

"I know some of the devoutest young ladies in Vienna who scruple not to waltz. There is Madame Washington Lynch waltzes, and she is a very good Catholic. I have waltzed with her myself, to-night, and she spoke of you in raptures. It is not a sin, I assure you, mademoiselle. You err to be so strict. At least suffer me to lead you back to the *salle*

where they are dancing, and which your absence deprives of so great an ornament."

She took his arm and moved forward slowly, as if ashamed to persist in her refusal. Alban was so near as she passed that he could see the blonde round the neck of her dress rise and fall. The hand which was free stole up to a spot where, doubtless, some memento was hidden. People made way for the Count; Alban followed; they got within the circle in the dancing-room; the waltzers swam round. Mary's eyes were steadily bent on the floor.

"I prevent your dancing, M. le Comte."

"Ah, one turn with you, mademoiselle, and I vow to you that I will waltz no more this evening."

"I certainly shall not waltz, monsieur, and if you please, I will not trust myself to look at the waltzing. I know, sir, that neither is a sin, but I have been advised that it is difficult to do either without sinning." She turned and perceived Alban, whose arm she almost instinctively took, relinquishing that of the brilliant foreigner.

"Ah, I see that you are formed to be a saint, mademoiselle," said the latter. "I will not urge you further against your holy resolutions. More late in the evening I hope to have the honour of your hand in the quadrille. *Priez pour moi*," he added, bowing

and smiling. But in a minute he was again among the waltzers.

It was with Miriam. Alban could not help trying to persuade Miss De Groot to look at this pair. Miriam's slippers had no tie, nor even a heel,—the fashion of Spain,—so that it was wonderful how she kept them on by the mere muscular action—twinkling, both, like moonbeams on waves. The room was now so crowded, especially about the doors, that it was nearly impossible to stir from the spot where they were; it was somewhat difficult to keep from crowding in upon the dancers, and sometimes Mary, who persisted in not looking up, was pushed against her companion by some sweeping couple. Alban was offended at this strictness, particularly that she would not look at the graceful Miriam. Not that he wanted Mary to waltz—far from it: he hardly knew what he wanted. Henrietta was now waltzing with Van Brugh, and her drapery brushed them as she went by.

“I must get into the other room, Mr. Alban: can't you manage it?”

They ran across the waltzers. Alban penetrated resolutely the opposite mass towards the front drawing-room. He was obliged to put his arm fairly round Mary, which caused the colour again to brighten and

deepen in her cheek and temples. She had shunned Scylla to encounter Charybdis. At length they got through the folding-doors, and found fresher air and iced punches circulating, while Mrs. Seixas was the object of attraction. She sat indolently on a divan — dark, but clear as amber, superbly embonpoint, and blazing with jewels like an Orient queen, or one of the diamond images of King Zeyn. Altogether, these Jewesses outshone all the other women present, and their barbaric splendour transported the imagination to a remoter age and distant clime. No wonder it affected the dreamy Alban. Yet somehow a feeling had been awakened in our hero's heart, an idea (though repelled) had been presented to his mind, which made all the splendours of the world and seductions of sense seem dim and weak. In the midst of this scene, so opposed to the Cross in every shape, he had experienced one of those moments when Truth sends a piercing ray into the soul, and discovers to it the vanity of all earthly things. Was *he* the youth who that very day had dreamed of a flight to Syria with Miriam Seixas, and a passionate retirement with her in the desert or the mountains of that clime of the sun, preparatory to a fierce career of battle and empire!

At supper these sublime fancies received another shock. While our Mahomet was offering his Ayesha

some oysters, (which she of course refused, since that delicacy was forbidden by the law of Moses,) a careless youth ran against him, and made him spill some of the liquid on her dress. The individual who had caused this misfortune turned to apologize, and, in so doing, let nearly a plateful of the same mixture run over Mary De Groot's pink and silver skirt.

"Oh, my pretty dress," exclaimed she, in consternation, hastily wiping it with her handkerchief. — "How provoking! I declare, Mr. Lynch, you deserve not to be invited to another dancing party this winter." — But she caught Alban's eye, and laughed. — "I will make him pay me for it, and put the money in the poor-box."

Miriam said not a word, except to assure Mr. Atherton that it was of no earthly consequence, but she answered young Lynch's frightened apology with one look of her expressive Oriental face — a glance of her long Jewish eye — fit to have conveyed the tragic wrath of a Norma.

CHAPTER XV.

EVER since God made man "male and female," humanity has been bound up with the distinction of sex. By which we don't mean precisely that the world has ever since been made up of men and women, — though that is true also, and a great many surprising reflections might be made upon it, if the fact were not so familiar, — but that the two sorts of human beings are so linked that there can be no history of either that does not mention its relations with the other at every point. The part which woman played in the Fall of the race, and that which she took (so gloriously) in its Redemption, have been often celebrated; and so it has been observed that there never was a great event in history, whether sacred

or profane, but a woman was somehow mixed up with it.

Did not a woman cause the downfall of the kingly government in Rome? Did not a woman lose Antony the empire of the world? Were not the fortunes of the great Napoleon (to come down to modern times) twined with the regal destiny, and partly wrought out (giving all credit to his victories) by the social charms of the gentle Josephine? In philosophy, who can think of Abelard, the founder of rationalism, without calling up Heloise? In religion, would there have been a schism in England without an Anne Boleyn? In the crises of the true Church, have we not, under the old Law, the wife of Potiphar and the daughter of Pharaoh, the prophetic Deborah, the queenly Esther, and the heroic Judith? and under the New, a Clotilde and an Isabella, a Catherine of Sienna and a Saint Theresa?

To leave this grand sphere, and come to individuals, every soul that has a history—that is not cut short of its development, or does not wither abortively on the stem—passes through the mysterious ordeal which this distinction imposes. And so great is the frailty of the heart on this side, so strict and pure the line of duty prescribed to us, to deviate from it, at least in thought, is so easy and secret, that without the most

special and efficient aid from some divine Familiar of the soul, and a fidelity as prompt as humble to His slightest whisper, no one can hope to pass unsullied and unscathed through the trial. But how lovely and serene is the virtue that does so triumph! Above mere innocence, above the holiest penitence, it stands uninjured in the arena wet with the soul's blood of multitudes, and the wild beasts of the desert—the Passions—crouch, o'ermastered, at its chaste feet, and respect, with trembling, the sacred hem of its snow-white garments.

Is this so, or is it not? If it is so, how can this immense field of the inward history be left out of the domain of the fictionist who would pourtray the human heart and its vicissitudes? Why should not a writer who takes the highest point of view from which to look down upon life, that is, its relation to the hereafter—why should not he treat these matters in a masculine and flowing style? It is the want of this that has rendered the French Catholic literature so weak and ineffective. But all religious novels, hitherto, have been so entirely devoted to cant, that the least manliness of treatment surprises and shocks in a work that avows a religious aim; a freedom which in Blackwood, and from the pen of KIT NORTH, passes for innocent, produces a huge outcry when it

is met. with here; and what elicits no rebuke when found in Ik Marvel or Hawthorne, excites the hypocritical indignation of the whole critical tribe, in our well-meant books.

Well, Mary De Groot would retire after supper with her parents, in spite of all remonstrances, although Miss Clinton pressed her to stay all night, and Alban offered to take her home whenever she liked — a proposition which her father encouraged. Nor let any one be surprised at this, for the confidence which American parents place in their daughters is one of the features of our society, and very seldom is it abused. As foreigners always notice, the young ladies themselves lose something of the graceful timidity, the modesty seeking shelter under the maternal wing, that characterizes the well-nurtured female youth of Europe; but impertinence, if their calm, self-possessed demeanour admitted of it, they would know how to check as easily as any matrons in the world. Perhaps this cool self-dependence involves some indifference to the nicer shades of delicacy, or, to say truth, an inappreciation of them: but let that pass too. Freedom is a good, and at least our girls are free.

Mr. De Groot was strangely anxious to throw his daughter and her friend together in all the ways

permitted by our manners, and doubtless such a wise man as he had his reasons. But it was of no use in this instance. In vain, too, Henrietta (vowing it would break up the party—she had seen how much our friend the Count admired Miss De Groot) called her a spoil-sport. The young lady was resolute, though far from the appearance of moroseness. The brightness of her cheek, the sparkle of her eye, and beauty of her smile, intimated, on the contrary, that the emotional nature was in a state of quick effervescence. The various incidents of the evening had affected her, in fact, slightly one by one, but the repetition had at length awakened all her sensibility. We have ill painted this charming girl if it has not been seen already, that, with lively and even passionate feelings, she possessed a clear idea of duty, and unusual strength of purpose to carry it out. And it is to be supposed (without wishing to cant) that as she had not sought this scene of temptation, nor up to this moment was responsible for remaining in it, whatever help she needed was given to that honest will, which, in short, triumphed. Some giddy things she might have said, some vain pleasure felt in the fine things said to her, some transient jealousies, some earthly wishes, may have crossed her tender bosom, but she had gained four or five little victories over

herself. She must have a bright little crown for every one.

She was strongly tempted at this moment to stay (as all persuaded her) after father and mother, and go home under Mr. Alban's escort at a later hour in a carriage all by themselves. An instinct (for we novelists see every thing) warned her that something would come of it. By the tumult in her own heart she divined (shall we confess?) the state of his, and guessed that such an opportunity would not pass without one of those sweet explanations which she had read of in books, and sometimes had imagined in girlish revery, and which, however she might feel bound to receive it, and whatever might be the result, would be an era in her life. It is almost a pity that she had not yielded to the temptation, and to the sharp-witted jealousy that gave it double force; but the more she was inclined to do so, the more, in her modesty, she shrank, and the more, in her strict principle, she refused. She broke away from Miss Clinton, who had seized hold of her hood, and fairly tying it on, laughed a merry good-night, and went down stairs, attended by Alban to the carriage. Ah! 'tis a pity she did not stay: but so the fates ordained, to give a needful lesson to presumptuous youth.

Returning to the ball, he was caught in passing

the supper-room by Van Brugh, and compelled to come in and drink some more champagne. Many other young men were lingering to eat partridges, and toss off champagne after their manner. Van Brugh assured him that this wine was like so much water, which our hero, being unused to it, partly believed. They drank it in tumblers, touching their glasses, with laughter and many compliments. It was a gay party that sprang up stairs, and encountered the Seixases also going away. Miss Clinton was teasing Miriam too to stay.

"This must be put a stop to, Atherton," cried Livingston.

Miss Seixas turns a deaf ear to Van Brugh's representations, she listens to Miss Clinton's entreaties with an unmoved smile, but when the young Atherton chimes in, begging to dance with her, and urging that he has not been able to do so all the evening, offering, in fine, to attend her home, after a yielding glance at her brother, who offers no opposition to an arrangement which, as we have seen, the manners of the country authorized, she suffers herself to be led triumphantly back to the dancing-room. They were waltzing; Alban had never waltzed in his life, but wine gave him courage for any thing; and having learned to dance at a very early age, before he

was sent to that pious place, Babylon, he caught the step from Miss Seixas directly. Not perfectly, of course; as who learns any thing perfectly at once? Mary De Groot had been advised (it never would have taken that precise shape in her own mind otherwise) of the difficulty of waltzing without sinning; that is, as it seemed to Alban at present, (not being very clear in his perceptions,) without treading on his partner's toes; for the agreeable sensations (has not that delightful moral Satirist, the author of the *Lorgnette*, described them at length?) which he experienced in being taught by Miss Seixas, surely there was no sin in those. She bore his blunders with an almost Christian patience, and only laughed very much when obliged to stop to recover her slipper.

Henrietta next offered herself to complete his education, and the difficulty of waltzing without some trifling peccadillo at least, was now increased tenfold. Of course we mean nothing but what was innocent, and accordant with the usages of good society. Nature had made Henrietta fair, and fashion had designed her dress, or undress:—how could she help either? She had adopted, since supper, a novel and spirited style of managing her light exterior drapery, instead of letting it stream cloud-like behind her, by taking it up on one side, and throwing the full skirts, fine

as cobweb and white as spray, over the arm. What with the radiant arm half buried in those innumerable folds of semi-transparent tissue, the silver gleam of the rich under-dress, and the rosy snows that crowned this dazzling figure, like an Alpine aiguille seen by sunrise in the vale of Chamouni, she seemed some bright and powerful nymph approaching to charm a mere mortal, and our poor Alban, we confess, found her almost irresistible.

As the ships which approached the mountain of loadstone in the Arabian Tales, had all the iron drawn out of them by the mighty magnet, and went to pieces, so it is with the souls that near this fatal coast. Moreover, from the combined influences of the wine and whirling waltz, our hero's head began to swim, and his fine judgment to become not a little obscured. To vary our comparisons, he had arrived, unawares, in that region of inward illumination where the moral sense is eclipsed, and man walks in the twilight, or rather the penumbra, of the irrational natures. In plain English, Alban was partly tipsy—we grieve to record it. Physically, and, we fear, morally too, our young Puritan could no longer direct his steps; he made strange gyrations in the dance, and addressed his partner so strange observations, exemplifying the *in vino veritatem*, that Henrietta, for her

own sake as well as his, was glád to get him away from the company.

The staircase of the mansion was a spot which had been much occupied during the night by young people of both sexes, escaped from the heat of the rooms, or who found the locality favourable for flirtation. Crowds are always revolutionary, and the impossibility of obtaining a seat elsewhere caused the place to be eagerly appropriated by tired and panting damsels, armed with the flirting and restless fan. But at this hour of the ball it was deserted, except as retiring parties fitted up or down—up, gayly—down, in a hooded and mysterious silence. Hither Henrietta brought her partner, who had begun to talk about her school-days, evincing a knowledge more than he was fairly in possession of when in his sober senses, and which frightened her sufficiently. By a not unusual hallucination, confusing her individuality, he spoke as if he had shared in the history, and unwittingly made her the confidant of his own boyish follies—things to smile at, haply, were it not for the judgment that awaits our idle words, of which the crimson blush they can call up now, is a sort of anticipation.

We shall not try to show, for our readers' amusement, the softened and abbreviated pronunciation of

the English language which is peculiar to gentlemen in this interesting state: we could not expect to excel, or perhaps even equal, Messrs. Dickens and Thackeray in this splendid line. Suffice it rather to remark, how fortunate it is, (what has not always been observed,) that for those who have been merely surprised into this twilight reason, so thick with pitfalls and snares, habit is still a guide where reason ceases to be a light. Our Puritan—our church-member—our revivalist, so zealous for the conversion of his neighbours,—was giving his companion good advice—the best of advice, in fact. How many preach in their cups! The young lady's cheek was pale and red by turns; her eyes sparkled with anger or shot glances of fear, and sometimes of a kind of admiration; for the talent and energetic *morale* of Atherton were conspicuous in the whole thing; there was genius shining drolly through the tipsy humour, and a passionate masculine force that made her tremble and bend. And curiously enough, such sway has the love of strong emotions, that Henrietta would have been sorry to miss this humiliating scene; of course she never thought of calling a servant to terminate it, or of asking some gentleman to take care of his friend, or of escaping to the protection of the gay society assembled in her mother's saloons.

Besides, was she not already flirting with Atherton, and quite disposed, almost without being conscious of it, to take some woman's revenge upon Mary De Groot? and was she not already further engaged in some such scheme than she at all suspected? Not that Henrietta was capable of forming a regular plan of this kind, but the nature of some people works like a deep-laid combination, and they approach only the more surely, step by step, to their half-unconscious object.

The precise thing which made Henrietta dangerous was her want of purpose; she but meant to flirt with a young man whom she knew to be in love with, and believed to be engaged to, another young woman; he was so pious and high-toned, that she would have been pleased to make him show his weakness; but only a monster or a fool (and she was neither) could have deliberately planned the result to which her conduct tended.

We shall dismiss her now, for having served her purpose of causing our proud hero a very humiliating slip, our story has no further need of her. A lady and gentleman came out of the half-open door of the saloon, but seeing Miss Clinton and Alban, the lady instantly drew back, and both returned whence they came. Forthwith Miss Clinton sprang up, and fled up stairs, flight after flight, till the moonlight gleam of her dra-

perty — so elegant and pure in effect — was lost in an upper region of obscurity. Then a party came from the cloak-rooms and descended, arresting Alban on the landing-place; and one excellent and friendly matron stopped to talk to him, late as it was, and sent a message to his mother. Then, ere these people were fairly gone, the Count came up from the rooms below, led him, whether he would or no, into the toilet-room, and made him deluge his head with *eau de Cologne*.

"Use it freely, *mon cher*! That Monsieur Van Brugh meant you no good in persuading you to drink so freely of that dam champagne. I saw you could n't navigate, when you ran against Miss Seixas and me. *Eh, bien*! you are better. I am going back to the *bal*, but you will do well to return *chez vous*."

"I have the honour to wait on a young lady home."

"You are a very fortunate man, Mr. Atherton," said the Count, laughing, as he quitted him. "Admitting always that it is a custom *fort singulière*."

"I will return to this Jewess," thought Alban, descending the stairs two or three steps at a time. "The antique Law which she reveres is the essence of modesty and purity, as the Reader *Ben Levi* affirms. With her I shall be in no danger of forgetting the respect I owe to myself or to others."

The ball-room was still full of light-hearted dancers; the Count was again indefatigably waltzing; Miriam stood near a window listening, with a vacant air, to the compliments of Van Brugh. Alban approached, pale, but with a sparkling eye.

"One more waltz, beautiful Miriam."

"Spare my tip-toes," she answered, instantly breaking into a smile, and laying her hand on his shoulder. But he whirled her round the room without missing a step.

"What have you done with Miss Clinton, Atherton?" demanded Van Brugh, the first rest they made.

"She has gone up stairs, I believe. Are you ready for another turn, fair Miriam?"

"Fair, but not a blonde: I detest blondes," said the young lady.

Again and again they swept round, till Miriam wisely considered they had been partners long enough, and still Alban kept the step; and his eye grew brighter and brighter.

"Since you have really learned to waltz now, Mr. Atherton, suppose that we go home."

The distance they had to accomplish was considerable, being nearly the whole length of Broadway, and it was half-past two when the coach sluggishly stopped

in State street. Mr. Seixas himself came to the door to admit his sister, but instead of getting out, Miriam called to him from the coach window. He came down the old marble steps.

"Mr. Atherton has swooned in the carriage, my brother. We were obliged to stop to recover him, but he is not yet conscious."

Alban lay in the bottom of the carriage, with his head resting against the cushions.

"Why did you not take him home, Miriam?"

"I knew not where that might be."

"This is the home of his childhood," said her brother, after some meditation, "we cannot deny him its hospitality. You are strong, Miriam; help me lift the boy out of the carriage."

A watchman, on his beat, came forward and aided, or affected to aid, in carrying the young man up the steps of the mansion. Alban was soon laid upon the divan of the apartment where he first saw the Hebrew brother and sister.

The scene was remarkable even for a metropolis which is the resort of all nations. Seixas (known on 'Change by his regular features and Hebrew stoop) was attired in an Oriental robe of scarlet and sables, having loose hanging sleeves. A high cap, in the same style, crowned his thick black curls, and the jetty

beard which fringed his colourless, peculiar visage, completed the ideal of his race. It was an Eastern, and no mean specimen of one, who regarded, with a look tranquil as marble, that pale face of the youth, on which an impassioned expression still lingered. Miriam, who, drawn up to her utmost height, looked down upon the insensible Alban with a strange regard, was quite the same. The robe which she had worn at the ball was a light-blue India brocade, fitting closely to her shape, moulded (as we have before said) after the type of beauty in its earliest haunts. The neck had a border of gems, and was so cut as to show just so much of the fine amber bust as a sculptor would have required to support the lovely head: the rounded, yet delicate and taper, arms were bare. She lifted the skirt carelessly over one knee, the foot resting on the cushion where the young man lay, with a graceful boldness that could only belong to one accustomed to the flowing trowser of the East; showing, what a deep slit up the side also exposed, an under-skirt or petticoat of cherry satin finely worked in silver. The barbaric splendour of this dress was relieved by the perfect simplicity of her black hair with its Spanish plait, and by the light effect of a veil of white lace which hung from her comb, and floated like a mist around her. Miriam Seixas, from her earliest years,

had been a Smyrniote at home, a Spanish maiden in society.

"Was this sudden?" inquired Seixas.

"He had been saying to me beautiful but impossible things," answered Miriam, without taking her eyes off from Alban. "All at once he laid his hand on his heart, and went off thus."

"Were they ardent things, Miriam?" asked her brother.

"It may be. I never heard such before," replied the maiden, with haughty tranquillity.

"Were the lad's actions as strange to thee, Miriam, as his words?" continued Seixas, with a sudden flash of the eye, and turning towards her his astute Jewish countenance. "A freedom passes for naught with the colder females of this land, which a Spanish woman would resent as a deadly insult."

"Thyself, Manuel," replied his sister, rather slowly, but with her eyes still bent down on Atherton's form, "couldst not respect me more scrupulously, in obedience to our sacred law, than this young Gentile to-night."

"A swoon from wine and emotional excitement is sometimes dangerous," said Manuel, meditatively. He stooped down and felt Alban's pulse, still looking fixedly in his face with those gleaming eyes. "Re-

main with the boy, Miriam, while I seek a remedy which may rouse him."

The countenance of the young Jewess underwent an instantaneous change when her brother had disappeared. She advanced a step, and slipped down at the same time, in a careless Eastern way, on the edge of the low divan. She took Atherton's hand into her lap; her soft, peculiar face, bent down to gaze on his, assumed an expression indescribably tender and compassionate. She remained thus, without motion almost, until her brother's step resounded again in the next apartment, when, after a momentary sidelong glance of her eloquent eye, she bent down still further, and imprinted a kiss on the youth's pallid lips. But when Manuel again drew aside the curtain between the rooms, Miriam had resumed the position in which he had left her, and only the long swell of her respiration, lifting the gold-wrought silk of her robe higher and more frequently than before, betrayed her recent passion.

"Go you, Miriam, — for 't is not worth the pains of calling servants, — and dispose the apartment over this to receive the young Atherton. He was born in it, I have heard him say, as were two generations of his maternal ancestors, merchants and exiles like ourselves."

"That chamber is next mine own, thou knowest," said the maiden, reservedly.

"There is no other where he can fitly be placed. Lock the door between thy chamber and his, if such a lad inspires thee with fear. Thou wilt do that at all events."

"It is not him that I fear," said Miriam. "I shall lock the door, of course; but do thou take the key."

"If thy purity, or my trust in thee, needed such a precaution," replied Manuel, with an air of surprise, "neither were worth preserving. Mindest thou that I questioned thee but now a little sharply? Nay, I might doubt the lad for a moment, for he is but a Christian, after all; but my sister is above the very name of suspicion."

CHAPTER XVI.

At about eleven o'clock, on Friday morning, our hero awoke, and heard Trinity bells tolling. At first, he supposed that it was St. John's, thinking himself in Grey street, till, puzzled by the room and furniture, he sprang out of bed, and ran to the window. The Battery, white with new-fallen snow—the wintry bay, and the tide dashing against the old sea-forts—the scene familiar to his childhood—told him where he was; and then he looked around and recognised the room which, in childhood, had been his. It all flashed on him—how he had drunk too much wine at a party, had unpardonably insulted one young lady, and betrayed to another the most ridiculous vanity conceivable. He divined that the Seixases had too well

learned his condition, and had taken him in from pity; for his memory was here at fault. He could recall nothing later than a violent spasm at the heart, as he was talking in a most absurd way to Miriam Seixas, in the carriage. Hurrying to the glass, he perceived a pale, haggard face. Internally he felt an utter sickness and hollowness, a sense of misery and remorse. Glancing around the room, he perceived his clothes laid in order, with fresh linen, slippers, a chamber-robe, and a shower-bath with its curtains open. He bathed and dressed as expeditiously as possible, hoping to escape from the house without notice.

While dressing, he adopted (as is usual on such occasions) several resolutions. First, he would write to Miss Clinton, retracting his unwarrantable observations, and imploring her forgiveness. Then he must see Miriam, (he would rather enter the cage of a lioness,) and beg her to forget his folly — at least, not to mention it. And he must certainly tell the whole story, so far as it is proper to be told, to Mary De Groot. He had implicated her (fool that he was) with Miss Clinton; and besides, it was due to her that she should know his weakness — so true a friend as she was! Otherwise he should feel like a thief. But what should he say to his father and mother, in explanation of his staying out all night?

After involuntarily imagining fifty false statements, he adhered to the resolution of telling the exact truth. Perhaps Seixas had already told his father, and would not Henrietta avenge herself by telling every body that Mr. Atherton got tipsy at supper! Had Miriam made herself merry that morning, with her sister-in-law, at his expense? Would it be all over town? Poor young man!

So he finished dressing and went down, hoping to make his exit unobserved, and meaning to repair to Delmonico's for breakfast.

He was met at the foot of the stairs by Miss Seixas's personal attendant, who invited him with a sweet tone of arch respect into a room overlooking the Bay, and adorned with innumerable fine engravings, where a fire glowed cheerfully, and a table was spread. Tea, coffee, and cocoa were proffered him by the sprightly Rebecca, and a dumb waiter, at her touch, brought up every other luxury of a Knickerbocker breakfast—except ham and eggs. A beautiful bouquet lay beside his plate, and a note. The last was as follows:—

“DEAR ATHERTON, — To save your mother's anxiety I despatched a line to Grey street this morning, to say that you had kindly attended Miriam home

last night at my request, and that, on account of the lateness of the hour, I had kept you. I added, that unless you had been sound asleep after so much dissipation, you would doubtless send your love. If I were you, I would not mention having been ill, as it might excite groundless apprehensions in regard to your health; and I really think that your singular seizure was entirely owing to your stomach being disordered by that confounded bad champagne of Clinton's, which I have no doubt was made in New Jersey.

“Faithfully yours,

“SEIXAS.”

The perusal of this note relieved our hero's mind considerably, and when a cup of coffee had dissipated his remaining headache, he was able to do his breakfast justice. He inquired cheerfully for the ladies, and learned from his dark-eyed, intelligent attendant, that Mrs. Seixas had not yet risen — a fresh consolation, although it confirmed an opinion he already entertained of her indolence—but that her more youthful mistress had been up a couple of hours, and that it was she who had selected the bouquet for Mr. Atherton from the conservatory, as soon as she knew that he was stirring.

Fascinating and reviving attentions! Alban ad-

mired the fragrance and happy combination of roses and myrtle in the bouquet, and asked if he could see Miss Seixas, not doubting, though somewhat fearing, to receive an affirmative reply. But Rebecca, with a smile and arch toss, responded, that at that early hour he could not expect a young lady to be presentable. Not that he must infer, continued she, quite in the style of an Abigail in *Gil Blas*, that her mistress was one of those fine ladies who, in the morning, before being dressed for company, appear in a dirty and crumpled loose gown, and untidy hair, or flit from room to room in petticoat and stays, and stockings down to the heel, (the young Spanish Jewess was evidently describing something very common;)—no, it was only the perfect modesty and dignity of Donna Miriam that would prevent her from receiving a young cavalier like Señor Atherton, in a wrapper, though white as snow. Alban let her run on, but when he had finished his last cup of tea, slipped into her hand, (quite appropriately,) a Spanish pillared dollar, and begged her to procure him a moment's interview with her young lady before he quitted the house.

“Why, you see, señor, replied Rebecca, dubiously, “what you ask is hard and easy. No one need know if you spend an hour or two with Donna Miriam, for the Señora Seixas is asleep at this moment, and

Moses has gone on an errand for my master to the upper part of the city, whence he will not return, I know, before three o'clock; and there is nobody else in the house but the old black cook, who is so fat that she can't get up stairs, and Antonia, the Christian maid-servant, (for we must have one for the Sabbath, señor,) and she never by any possibility comes into this part of the house, unless she is called to bring wood or water, or a fresh scuttle of this nasty coal; and I need not tell you, Señor Atherton, who were born in the house, that Antonia has her backstairs. But all these favourable circumstances, of which another would take advantage, are just what will prevent my young lady from acceding to your request."

"Well, well, Rebecca; enough said," interrupted Alban impatiently; "you can but deliver my message to your mistress. Say that I beg her to see me for a few minutes; for I have — yes, I have an important favour to ask."

Rebecca retired with a shake of the head, which rather intimated her sense that no good would come of it, than any foreboding of the hopelessness of her errand. She was absent so long that Alban was beginning to despair, although, by a common contradiction, he was not sure whether he wished his

request to be granted or not, when at last she returned with a grave, flushed face, and, with an air of mystery, bade him follow her. She led the way into the back drawing-room, which Alban had not entered since he had renewed his acquaintance with his childhood's home as the dwelling of these foreign Jews.

Rebecca closed and locked the white folding-doors between the two drawing-rooms, and let down the curtain already described, the solemn folds of which on that side were of dark purple, making an effective contrast with the old-fashioned white pillars and architrave of the doorway in which it hung. The walls of the room were adorned with Hebrew inscriptions in gold and colour; the seats and furniture were of carved ebony, with draperies of purple velvet; and the means for lighting it at night consisted of silver lamps, ranged on tall stands or candelabra of ebony, and of antique silver branches on the mantel. A fire of hickory wood, laid on curious silver andirons, blazed in the chimney as in the time of Alban's mother. At one end of the room stood a harp, and near the fire, a table, whereon Rebecca deposited a casket of ebony mounted with silver. She then turned the key in a door at the lower extremity of the room, which conducted, as Alban remembered, into the back hall and servants' stair. She also drew the

window-curtains in such a manner that no one could see into the room from the garden. Alban wondered that the girl was so long, and why she took these precautions; but she approached him again before going to summon her mistress.

"Señor Atherton," she said, "my young lady is about to see you alone, although I begged her to let me be present at such a distance that you might say what you liked to each other without my overhearing it. Now it is very plain to me, of course, what this means, as well as her solicitude about your breakfast, and the pretty message conveyed in those flowers, which I understand as well as she, (and I hope you will take care my master does not see that bouquet.) She loves you, señor, as you doubtless know well enough; and it can't turn to good, for although she says that you believe our holy law, and worship only the God of Abraham, it makes no difference, since you are not of her race, and she is betrothed since she was twelve years old to her cousin Josef. Ah, señor, my mistress is not yet eighteen: she is as simple-hearted as a child, with all her lofty manners; and though she is loyalty itself, and chaste as the daughter of Jephtha, the blood which flows in her veins is not like that of your Northern damsels; you must not treat her as you would one of them. You have one

of those calm glances, Señor Atherton, which show self-command; think, then, for her as well as yourself, and do not by words, still less by caresses, to which, however innocent you may think them, she is wholly unaccustomed, awaken the sensibility of my mistress, which the more it has hitherto lain dormant, the more violent and uncontrollable will it be when it is roused."

The manner of the young Jewess was animated in the extreme, and her language tinged with a Southern poetry from the earnestness of her feelings. Alban was naturally much embarrassed for a reply, and before he had time to frame one, the quick ear of the maiden caught the step of her mistress on the stair, and she darted away with an appealing look. Miriam's voice was heard without in a tone of impatient reproof, and the maid submissively answering. The young lady rejoined more softly, and immediately entered. Rebecca closed the door, but before doing so, looked in again and made Atherton a quick gesture of warning.

What, thought Alban, if Miriam should take seriously the presumptuous proposal which he was aware of having made her in his light-brained delusion the night before? The possibility startled him, but being essentially chivalrous in his feelings, his

instant decision was that in that case he ought to make good what he had said. He could recall his state of mind pretty exactly, the sense of being unworthy of Mary De Groot, the belief that he had lost her for ever by his silly behaviour with Miss Clinton, the vain idea that Miss Seixas loved and would pardon him; the wild determination to throw himself at her feet and implore her to share the brilliant destinies of which he had hitherto only dreamed, but which the time was now come to realize. He had shown too much method in his madness, for her to set the substance down to wine and excitement, though she might the manner. The ideas were linked to those which she had heard from him in conversation with her brother, and which, he always flattered himself, had moved her silent enthusiasm; and although, as respected herself, it was not the language of passion which he had employed, still the proposition itself implied all that woman wishes on that subject, and from the very tranquillity of the terms in which it was conveyed, it might have impressed her as more sincere and deliberate, while it less alarmed her modesty and prudence.

Such thoughts passed like lightning through his mind, as Miriam now approached him, with the bending humility which always characterized her first

address. On this occasion, she wore a look of peculiar submission, almost amounting to fear, and inclined her half-veiled head before him, without raising her eyes from the carpet.

In spite of the nervousness with which he had anticipated the interview, he could not help regarding her with curiosity, never having seen her before in this thoroughly domestic guise. The fair inhabitant of the Spanish Main knows, for the most part, no medium between the full dress of promenade or ball, and the slatternly disarray which Rebecca had described; if the black silk petticoat be whole, the lace-trimmed chemise tolerably clean, the young lady is fit to receive all her acquaintances, male and female, to discuss the scandal of the hour, and honour with the touch of her lips the fragrant *cigarito* which you are about to smoke in her presence. But the very neatest of Mr. Alban's New England cousins need not have been ashamed of Miriam's snow-white wrapper. She had added to it a mantilla of black lace, placed with care over her head, and which she gathered around her as if to hide the light robe beneath. Her black hair, which never was glossier, took a gleam from the fire, and her eyes, when she raised them for a moment, darted a strange soft light which might be partly from the same source. Alban had never

felt her presence so softening, and this manner, united to what Rebecca had said, and the reflections which we have detailed above, disconcerted the apology he had intended to make, and left him in a perfect perplexity how to address her. He thought of the bouquet which he held in his hand. The flowers, doubtless, did speak a language.

"I wished to thank you for this," said he, perhaps somewhat coldly. "It is a kind answer to my last night's presumption."

"I thought not of seeing you when I sent it, Señor Alban."

She slightly turned from him, and bending her head, seemed to struggle with a feeling which he could in no wise interpret; then she advanced with a quick movement to the table, and opened the ebon casket with a key which she held concealed in her hand. It was filled with cases of red silk, containing a most surprising quantity of jewels. She drew out the glittering contents, and spread them on the table before Alban's wondering eyes. They were apparently the ornaments of an Eastern lady, and of enormous value, — bracelets and necklaces of emerald and turquoise; great strings of pearls; a girdle composed entirely of brilliants; a Turkish dagger hilted with rubies; ear-rings, anklets, slippers, and velvet

caps for the head, that were alike absolutely one mass of diamonds.

"Take these," said Miriam, extending her hand to him with an inexpressible air of sweetness and humility, "and go raise the standard of Israel on the land of our inheritance, if perhaps God will deliver us by the hand of a believing Gentile, in whom must flow, I cannot but think, unknown to himself, the blood of our sacred tribe. I have loved thee unawares. *That* I can no longer help," she continued, laying her hand on her heart, "but my faith, thou knowest, is plighted to another, and I must keep it. A holy enterprise cannot begin with an act of treason. Take these, then, and go; it is all Miriam can give thee, though she would willingly have given all."

He was thunderstruck.

"Except thou fly with me, Miriam," he exclaimed, adopting her own tone, while he involuntarily drew near to take her hand, "this is impossible."

She drew back a step or two, with haste, and made a repellant gesture, as if to warn him not to touch her.

"It is all mine," she said;—"the portion of my Smyrniote mother. 'Tis a poor restitution for the heart which I owe thee and the person which is not mine to bestow. I shall be deeply grieved—incon-

solably — if thou refuse it at my hands. What if thou fail in thy daring enterprise! Have I not thought of that? It will still be a thing to remember for ever, that, after ages of contempt, the sword was drawn again for Judah.”

The more enthusiasm the young Jewess displayed, the more Alban's embarrassment increased. To her the whole was real; to him it had been but a dream — a wild, imaginative revery. He was not, and never could be, a Jew. Why, in his moments of greatest estrangement from Christianity ill understood, the cold reasonings by which Seixas had concluded against even the possibility of a *Divine* Messiah, had deeply offended him. Alban's heart was never really divorced from Christ, and he felt that truth, now when a Jewess who had touched at least his fancy, whose benevolence he had witnessed, and whose present generosity, as well as the sincerity of her virtue, excited his admiration, offered him an immense treasure to take arms against nothing else in reality but that name of sweetness and benediction. Never!

It was a delicate ground to break, to let Miriam know that she was deceived in regarding him as a young proselyte of the gate. She faltered and changed colour at the most cautious statement he

could frame to insinuate the error into which she had been led in this particular.

"I am not ashamed of my faith in Moses and the Prophets," said he. "I still believe a perfect unity in God, and freedom in man, in spite of his weakness, Miriam. I believe that our justice must be in truly fulfilling the Divine Law. But I believe also that grace has descended from the Most High to implant this justice in our souls. I believe that a Jewess like thee, a virgin like thee, and bearing thy very name, blossoming like Aaron's rod, conceived and bore the hope of Jew and Gentile alike—the JEHOVAH whom thou adorest."

Alban pronounced the sacred name in a manner known only to the Jews, and in which it is uttered by them only on certain rare occasions of awful solemnity, and Miriam, who had been listening in a startled attitude, threw herself hastily upon her knees and bowed her head to the carpet at his feet.

"Yes, worship Him, Miriam," continued Alban, with emotion, "the Notzry whom thy fathers in their ignorance slew, but thy God and theirs."

"It was not that I intended, thou knowest," replied Miriam, rising with agitation. "But be brief, Mr. Atherton. I comprehend now that you are still a Christian, but of which of the numberless sects of

Christianity? or will you found a new one?" she demanded sarcastically, and haughtily averting her face. Alban's reply was probably not unexpected, for her expression in listening to it altered only by being rapidly heightened into violence.

"The God of Israel has never wanted a people, Miriam. Yes, beautiful but unbelieving one! thy race is not more widely diffused by its exile, than the Catholic Church by its conquests."

"It is then a woman whom you will adore! I thought so," cried Miriam, in a bitterly scornful tone. "Is it not in the dark eyes of one that you have read the proofs of your new faith? How easily I discern your falsehood!" She drew herself up to her full height. "Gracious Heaven," she exclaimed, "why do I not repay this man's treachery as in my country the females of his own religion would!"

In her sudden jealousy and sense of slighted love, Miriam forgot every thing else. Her forehead grew purple with the dark blue veins that started up upon it. It seemed that her passion would stifle her. She caught up the Turkish dagger from the table, and raised it with a motion quicker than thought. The armed hand descended with such celerity and force, that, though Alban caught her wrist, he could not so far divert the blow but that the edge

of the weapon divided her fine robe, and the point grazed her breast. He wrested the dagger from her relaxing fingers and held her in his arms. She looked at him wildly.

"Tell me," she said, hardly able to speak from panting, "why did you make me think you loved a Jewess, and extort from my bosom a secret of which else I had myself been unconscious? And now I stand before you a woman—a maiden—whom you love not, but who has humbled herself to say that she loves you!"

"I *do* love you!" said Alban, with fondness, though shocked. "Be a Christian, Miriam, not adoring, but venerating the blessed Mary, your namesake, and worshipping her Son, the King of Israel, as you did just now in outward act, and I will joyfully take you away, with the treasures you would so generously have bestowed upon me. But overcome this wild emotion, proper to guilt and shame, not to virtue and honour like yours."

"Ah, thou mockest me, Alban. Yet thanks for holding back my wicked hand. God of my fathers! what would I have done! But release me;"—with a peculiar expression, struggling with that of pride and anguish—"see, I bleed; release me."

The dagger had barely grazed the skin, but the

blood trickled fast from the scratch, and Miriam stanch'd it with her handkerchief, heedless of Alban's eyes. Nothing could more forcibly express the sentiment of complete abandonment and desolation which had seized upon this maiden of half European, half Oriental education. And the emotions of Alban may be conceived. Pity, delicacy, gratitude, a desire to heal the wounds of her pride, blended with feelings which Mary De Groot, when most beloved, had never inspired; and, truth to say, the wisest and strongest have seldom come off conquerors in this strife.

And true it is that our Alban's behaviour in this critical juncture must call down upon him, as it has, the contempt of your true man of the world, your elegant critic, and rigid censor (pen in hand) of the morals of literature. He acted like a fool (omitting the expletive with which the appellation is commonly garnished), a spooney, and every thing that is unmanly, in not taking what all novels call "an unworthy advantage" of Miriam's weakness for him: but spooney or not, it is just such a spooney and fool (*subauditur* the aforesaid expletive) that we have conceived, and have determined to paint him. The fact is, he could not (in his weak, silly innocence) imagine the possibility of making any other than what even our friends, the above-mentioned men of the world and elegant

litterateurs, in a conventional sense, agree to call an "honourable" use of the advantages he possessed. We say he never dreamed of it: and the more fool he, of course, and spooney too, (don't spare the term,) although every fibre of his manly-looking, young, vigorous frame trembled with the force of the unfamiliar feeling, and new resolve accompanying it, as the young oak quivers in the gale that bends the tops of a whole forest, and fills the air with boughs and leaves.

"Hearken to me, Miriam," he said, in tones very different from those which he had lately employed, and the young daughter of the South instantly felt the change — "that which has touched thee so nearly, in my recovered faith, bears another aspect, which thou hast not considered. Had I, in spite of the reluctance of thy people to receive proselytes, become a Jew, thy betrothal to thy cousin, scarce just as it seems to me, would separate us more than ever, as thyself didst but now admit. But if *thou* becomest a Christian, thy conversion necessarily dissolves thy contract. To wear a mixed garment of linen and wool is forbidden by the law of Moses; so, for the baptized and unbaptized to be joined in wedlock is contrary to the Law of Christ. You will be free to bestow your hand upon me, Miriam, from the moment

that the waters of baptism shall have separated you from your nation, as the Red Sea divided your fathers from the Egyptians. I would not seduce thee, Miriam, even from thy unbelief, as I must term it, by the power I may possess over thy earthly affections; but thy human love may be His instrument, Who made and controls the heart, to open thine eyes, hitherto blinded by prejudice, to the light of heavenly truth. Think of that ungovernable violence of passion which has so long been hidden under thy virgin serenity of mien. Thy law condemns, but can it impart the inward strength thou needest to restrain it? Has it power to banish the keen remorse thou feelest, by the sense of innocence restored? Christ can do this for thee, Miriam. He can remove, in a moment, the shame that bows thy head, and calm the tempest which agitates thy bosom."

Even during this address, Miriam had gently concealed her bosom, and a further attempt to hide the spots of blood upon her wrapper, by drawing the veil over it, showed that hope was reviving in her humiliation, and the faith that she was beloved. Alban, perhaps, ascribed those symptoms to a conviction produced by his arguments, which were really due to a sense of her sex's power reviving in the woman. Miriam, on the other hand, was not sufficiently

reassured on that point, to dare resist the caresses with which her lover, giving way to his passion, now seconded his eloquence. He recurred to the picture which, in his delirium of the night before, he had drawn of their mutual existence in a remote land. The young Jewess, who passed from one extreme of feeling to another with Southern facility, murmuring a condemnation of her own weakness, tacitly consented to all that he proposed, when the door flew open, and Rebecca burst in, announcing that her master was approaching the house, and that madam, also, was just risen. The position of the young people gave a different turn to her exclamations.

"Oh, fie, Señor Atherton! is this your fine self-command? your arm round my mistress! Oh, sir, pray begone!"

"You don't understand it, Rebecca."

"Oh, yes, indeed, too well! Will you go, señor? What's to be done with these trinkets?"

Miriam, regardless of her maid's presence, leaned her head and clasped hands on Atherton's shoulder.

"This is base, Señor Atherton. You will ruin my young lady without benefiting yourself. There's my master's knock. Now, if you wish my assistance in future, señor, run yourself and open the door for him, while we escape with these things!"

At this suggestion, Alban extricated himself from Miriam, and darted off; yet hardly had he taken a step, ere he felt tempted to return, for Miss Seixas stood rooted, as if despairing, to the spot where he had left her. Rebecca, seeing his irresolution, when every moment was precious, and observing, for the first time, the tell-tale spots of blood on her lady's dress, became frantic, forced him out of the room with a violence approaching to fury, and locked the door. Even while he threw on his cloak, however, in the hall, the white raiment of the Hebrew maiden appeared above, at the top of the stairs, and Miriam's hand, mournfully waving, bade him farewell.

CHAPTER XVII.

It will be seen that our hero is gradually emerging into light, amid all the confusion which his passions and the world have raised. It is in the hour of temptation that the battle of life is lost or gained. Many are they who fall; few the victors. But to be wounded, however severely, is not to lose the battle; to be covered and defiled with blood and dust is nothing. The point is to see who, after the *mêlée* is over, stands with his sword drawn in his hand, and his enemy gasping at his feet.

Alban has made some points, and certainly lost others. This entanglement with Miriam Seixas is very much in his way, and is likely to injure the simplicity of his course. He will be afraid to submit

himself immediately to the Church, which is the true and generous course for him to take, lest he should be required to abandon his Jewish mistress. Any way, dispensations would be required, a formal marriage in the face of the Church must be resorted to, whereas Alban thinks of nothing but a civil contract and instant flight to a foreign land. As for poor Mary De Groot, her image recedes away into the distance again. In fact, her immaturity has been too much against her with a youth of Alban's age—which is the period of impatience, and will not wait for the slow ripening of the fruit it covets.

But since our fair readers naturally look for some respectable degree of fidelity in love in a hero, let us explain a little. If Alban is attached (as ladies say) to Mary, it must be remembered how smoothly the course of that true love has hitherto run. There has been no parental opposition; there is no prospective difficulty of a worldly kind; the partiality of a very young girl, the approbation of a wise father, the certainty of a fine fortune, smooth down this road to a most unromantic and unexciting level, while around Miriam is thrown a romantic and almost impassable barrier, to stimulate the imagination of youth. How can Alban be quite sure, either, of the constancy of one so young as Mary, during the years that must

VOL. II. 8*

elapse before she arrives at maturity of age and stature? How take advantage of that girlish preference at present? How be certain that it will last? How many young men would preserve an exact fidelity in similar circumstances, by abstaining from the passing *liaisons* of vanity, or even of vice? But Alban was too well-principled to think of these for a moment; and so when he felt the tide of his passions rising, he took it as a signal to unmoor his bark and put out boldly to sea. He would take no venture in which he did not risk his whole fortune. When he yields, as most men do, (it is a trick of human nature,) to the present charm, and forgets a future that may never arrive, it is only matrimony that he proposes; and yet he is but twenty: there is a good deal of pluck in him at least.

Besides, Alban is not aware that Mary, feels so great a tenderness for him as we suspect her of; and is it not plainly declared between them that her choice is self-limited to her own faith? A chivalrous sentiment has a great deal to do with his precipitation in the case of Miriam. By his fault she had been betrayed into an humiliating confession, and he felt himself obliged in honour to right her position. There is a nobleness even in our hero's faults; he errs from inexperience and modesty, and a certain sim-

plicity of the dreamy scholar. He had not supposed that he could be of consequence to a lady, and the calmness mixed with impetuosity, which he displayed at the discovery that he could, strike us as rather fine.

So much for those who have stigmatized his conduct in this case as ungentlemanlike, and have even talked of his meriting a horsewhip: we would not advise them to try it, for Alban was not one of the slim, fast youths of the present day; he had a capital constitution, a frame hardened by exercise, and in no respect enfeebled by wine, late hours, tobacco, and all kinds of debauch, "like they have;" and with all his gentleness and dreaminess, his simplicity and milk-and-water innocence, he would have understood a blow, would have been mighty apt to return it, and to a dead certainty, in the case we suppose, would half flay the literary gentleman, who made such an attempt, with his own horsewhip.

Well, his situation at present is a good deal embarrassing. There are three kinds of love to which man, possessing the entire constituents of manliness, is liable: that of the senses, of the imagination, and of the heart. By the heart we mean the affections which are founded on reason, and which take their colour from moral esteem, intellectual sympathy, and every

kind of virtuous domestic attraction, such as blesses the parental and the conjugal hearth alike, and makes the safeguard as well as the happiness of home. The first of these loves our hero in a manner defied, not without some inward faint-heartedness, it is true; but for the second, he has fairly put his foot into it; and as far as we can see, unless something occurs to frustrate his headstrong purpose, he will lose what is the true prize, if there is such a thing here below.

He himself is partly aware of the great dangers that environ him; he may lose, nay, he thinks he certainly will, what his judgment, and something more secret yet, declare incessantly to be the best lot he can hope for on earth, and not gain the inferior reward either. If he goes on in his present course, he will alienate half a dozen of the best friends in the world. Still he trims his sails, and keeps his vessel close to the wind. In the midst of his perplexities, a light has broken upon him, like a star emerging from clouds, and shining down upon a stormy ocean. He keeps his eye—as his bark now rolls this way, and now pitches that—upon this bright and steady lustre beaming over the watery waste, which, even to his own apprehensions, we say, threatens to swallow him up.

His first employment when he reached home from

the Seixases', was to pen a couple of notes, which, having no other way of sending them, he carried himself to their address. The first, which was directed to Miss Henrietta Clinton, was worded as follows:—

“MR. A. ATHERTON presents his compliments to Miss Clinton, and begs she will allow him to offer the most humble apologies for his impertinence last evening, which was wholly due, as she must have perceived, to an unfortunate excitement, the consequence of his imprudence. He seizes this opportunity to retract, in the most unqualified manner, every observation that could have given her offence, and to implore her forgiveness and oblivion of the whole transaction. If this be not sufficient, let her point out any other *amende* which she will deem satisfactory, and he will be happy to make it.

“*Friday Morning.*”

The second, addressed to Miss Mary De Groot, was in a different style. It ran thus:—

“GREY STREET. *Friday Morning.*

“DEAR MARY,—I venture to call you so, because to me you are a very dear friend and sister, and it is not, I hope, too great a presumption my taking for granted the same friendship on your part. This note

is written to inform you (it would be mean and unmanly to conceal it) that I made a most egregious fool of myself last night at Mrs. Clinton's after you went away, (when I did not know what I was about,) so that, if you knew all, you would not only blush for me, but I fear withdraw your friendship for ever from one so unworthy of it. The worst is my *betraying your confidence* in the most improper quarter—a confession which you will be sure to understand, and to despise me accordingly. Afterwards, I committed a second folly, not so contemptible as the first, nor so treacherous to a dear little friend of mine, but which perhaps—but that is nothing to the purpose.

“To be any more explicit than the above, would be a base impertinence; but I could not, after all the intimacy which has existed, and the generous confidence you have manifested in my honour and my principles, consent to *retain your esteem*, and *enjoy your friendship*, when I am conscious of being no longer worthy of either.

“But although unworthy of your friendship, dear Mary, I hope you will not refuse me your prayers, as I have great need of them at present.

“Your sincere and penitent friend,

“A. ATHERTON.

“P. S. No other person but myself is to blame, or has any thing to be ashamed of.”

These letters, which were written under very acute feelings, and cost the writer an immensity of suffering to pen them, from the intense shame of thinking them necessary, were both delivered by two o'clock. Alban might, perhaps, have done better (some may think) to have called personally, than to have written little notes to those two young ladies; but he had his reasons, whether they were good or not. That Miss Clinton would have seen him he had no doubt, and he feared the interview. No possible good could come of it, and some evil might. He had learned a world of experience of human nature that morning, and could divine beforehand the course of a *tête-à-tête* explanation with a young lady whom he had offended, or ought to have offended, as he had Henrietta. He was not at all inclined to repeat the scene he had just enacted with Miriam, on an infinitely lower key. A quick instinct told him that the same elements of ingenuousness and simplicity could not be present; and in fact, — astonished as he was, beyond measure, at the rebellion of that wild nature to which he had given the reins without reflection, — to act as he did (that is, to write instead

away, and then she recurred to the party at Mrs. Clinton's. As Alban knew that Miss De Groot was not in his mother's good graces any longer, he was particular to mention her refusal to waltz, and going away so early when every body begged her to stay. As Mrs. Atherton could not find fault with either of these things, the conversation languished, and when dinner was over, both his parents disposed themselves for a siesta. His father took the settee, his mother dozed in her rocking-chair, and Alban, after a short revery—much shorter than usual—took down the Episcopal Prayer-book. Action indisposes us to dreams. He took the common-sense view of every thing now, and nothing disgusted him so much as unreality.

He thought, (let it not excite surprise in any one that he reverts to these topics now: for the soul which is tossed on the sea of passion and circumstance, like a landsman on shipboard, naturally endeavours to fix its gaze upon the permanent objects of revelation, as on steady stars)—he thought of the positive dogma of the Catholic Church which declares baptism necessary to the salvation of infants—the dogma that so much offended Mr. De Groot, and at which Seixas, too, stumbled. .

Here, thought he, is contained the whole question. For this principle Christianity contends against the

of calling) was the result of a sharp, short, decisive victory over himself.

The reason why he contented himself with a note to Mary, was different. It was a motive of respect, and, as we have intimated, an acute sense of shame. Not when he came down stairs before breakfast, not when he asked to see Miss Seixas, not when he met her brother on the door-step, felt he such confusion as at the idea of meeting Mary De Groot. Vainly he endeavoured to account for the feeling; and as for seeing her without those self-accusations, as if nothing had happened, he shrunk from it as from an abyss. That there should be a thought, and a thought ever compelling him to face it, which he would not mention to her, seemed to him horrible. It was curious that he felt not thus in regard to Miriam. And, in fact, while writing the aforesaid letter, he nearly made some strange discoveries, of which more by and by.

Making a rapid course from the Avenue, he reached Grey street again in time for dinner.

His parents did not question him closely in regard to his staying at the Seixases' the night before. His father asked about the house; his mother inquired in what room he slept, and whether it seemed familiar to him. She hoped that he had remembered to ask for the ladies in the morning before coming

Jew on the one side, and the philosopher on the other. Is our race really fallen? Has it forfeited Heaven? Is expiation necessary? Has Christ alone wrought it? Yet to think of those millions to whom His atonement has never, in the course of Providence, been applied — the non-elect among mankind! Adults, who like Virgil in Dante may say

"Io son Virgilio; e per nul altro rio
Lo ciel perdei, che per non aver fe:"

Or infants, according to the same poet, banished where

"Non avea pianto, ma' che di sospiri,
Che l' aura eterna facean tremare."

"I imagine" (it is Alban speaks) "this vast multitude of souls lost out of the innumerable redeemed, wandering like pale stars in the illimitable outer night; neither offenders, nor yet just; untormented, yet not at rest; the undeveloped germs of spirits which might have shone brighter than angels in the blissful Presence, or groaned, haply, with demons in the lowest caverns of penal fire; the unlighted lamps of Heaven; the unkindled brands of Hell; the failures of the Eternal Designer; the mysterious abortions of the Universal Parent! Flowers of Adam's race coldly budding forth into the unhallowed light and air of

this world, and swept down by the destroying scythe to which their lives were forfeit ere they began, before the hand of pity could transplant them into the garden of the Lord! we weep over them hopelessly as they lie, without honour or beauty, on the cold, dead earth.

"Yes, we may grieve for them, but not accuse the justice or goodness of Him who has given them the mighty boon of existence. In their immortality of sighs, of soft wailing, and tears without bitterness, let them, in their turn, pity the infinite, infinite millions of possible beings, who never shall exist at all!

"After all, it is but one of those things which give to human life so deep a seriousness. Far from me be that pusillanimity of spirit, which blinks the immense dangers that environ our position. The happy soil which sprouted with all trees and herbs delightful to the eye and taste, the mild, innoxious air, the stars yet cloudless, nor shedding no unwholesome dews, the feverless breath of all creation, high and low, when the lion ate grass like the ox, the eagle fed on thick-rinded fruits, and the sinless appetites of man's uncorrupted flesh demanded no gratification which reason did not approve — when, (the crowning grace of this blissful state,) the tree of life stood in

the midst of the garden—all these have passed away.

“And the restoration is neither complete, nor yet universal. The merit and the glory which some shall win, are counterpoised by the guilt of others, and their eternal portion of wo. Suffice it that God is good! I believe it, and see in the very dogma of the Church respecting salvation, the proof of no human origin.”

The inquirer meditates and concludes, but at the end comes some regular duty of his existing position. Mrs. Atherton sighed with pleasure, when her son at length laid aside the Prayer-book, and took occasion to remind him of the Friday evening prayer-meeting. Alban recollected that he was a member of the Presbyterian Church, in good standing. Whether getting tipsy at a dancing party, and making a fool of himself over night, and proposing in the morning to run away with a Jewess, particularly fitted him to “take a part” in an evening prayer-meeting, he doubted. These little circumstances, if known, would scarcely edify, if they did not subject him—which was more than probable—to the somewhat inquisitorial discipline of the brethren. On the other hand, such was the nature of these societies, that a failure to comply with this duty would excite suspicion, either

of some secret guilt or some heterodox bias. Alban went to the prayer-meeting, and Dr. — did not fail to call upon him to pray. A young man from college is always a relief to the tedium of these occasions. When the brethren and sisters spoke afterwards of the exercises, young Atherton's prayer was singled out for warm approval. There was a freshness in his performances which agreeably roused the mind, and an unction that gratified the sensibility. Certainly, his prayer, that night, was unhackneyed. The rich quality of his voice, and its perpetual variety of modulation, contributed not slightly to the charm, and some of the females declared that, on this occasion, it affected them even to tears.

After meeting, Alban walked down to the Battery, and watched the house in State street for more than an hour, in the hope of seeing Miriam at her window. It was with difficulty, when he saw a light in her room, that he refrained from scaling the balcony — a feat he had a thousand times performed when a boy — and endeavouring to obtain a fresh interview, in which something definite might be agreed upon. His father and mother, who kept early hours, had retired when he reached home, and in his own room he found *three* notes, and a neat little parcel lying on the table. All were directed to himself, in female hands; and after

some hesitation which to open first, and trying to guess the writers, all being alike unknown to him, he opened that of which the handwriting looked simplest, and read as follows:—

“FIFTH AVENUE, *Friday*.

“DEAR ALBAN,—I gather from your note of this morning, (it startled me very much at first reading,) that you have done something which you feel to be wicked and silly, under the influence of wine. I am very, very sorry, of course, for you are a dear friend. There is no presumption, I assure you, in your taking that for granted. I wish you had a confessor, with whom you *could* be explicit, and who, besides advising you, could relieve your conscience from its burden. Sometimes we are left to sin, to humble our pride and teach us our frailty. You may live (I am sure you will) to thank God for letting you fall. Whatever you have done, I beg you won't speak of yourself any more in that unnatural strain, as unworthy of my friendship. We are all weak, and if God left me to myself, I might become the most degraded creature that breathes. Assuredly, I shall never cease to pray for you. I send this by Margaret, whom papa kindly lets me keep as a maid. She knows little of her duties yet, but is willing to learn, and I take a great deal of pleasure in teaching her.

I thought it best to ask papa's permission to answer your note, of course without saying any thing to him about the matter of it.

"Your affectionate friend,

"M. DE G."

"She is an angel!" cried Alban. It was like a ray of purest heavenly light shining in upon a gloomy scene, illumined only by red and smoking torches. He kissed the note devoutly, read it over twice or thrice, and placed it in his bosom. The next was in the third person.

"Miss CLINTON sends her compliments to Mr. Alban Atherton, and acknowledges the receipt of his note. Her delicacy was deeply wounded, she need scarcely say, by what escaped him last evening, under a temporary excitement, for which she readily believes he was not to blame. She would be glad of an opportunity to explain more fully than she can trust to paper, an occurrence which appears to have come to his knowledge, in which her conduct and *motives* were misunderstood. At present she would only observe that even last night she felt grief rather than resentment, in regard to what happened, and that she accepts Mr. A.'s frank and gentlemanlike apology as a full atonement.

"Miss C. has observed the strictest secrecy in regard to *all* that has occurred, and trusts to Mr. Atherton's honour to do the same. Will he have the goodness to burn this when he has perused it.

"Friday Evening."

Alban read this note also twice, and then, agreeably to the request of the writer, committed it to the flames. He opened the third epistle, trembling, yet eager, and read:—

"My brother found the poniard on the sofa, where you flung it when you had wrested it from my guilty hand, in that moment of passion. Other circumstances had already awakened his suspicions. He questioned Rebecca, and she betrayed all she knew. Manuel is not angry with us, Alban. I think he is flattered that thou lovest me. He forgives me for loving thee, whom he also loves. But he has convinced me—indeed, I knew it as well as thou—that unless I become a Christian I cannot be thine. Alban, I would abandon all else for thee but the religion of my fathers. I must see thee, therefore, no more. I have promised Manuel to accompany him, forthwith, to the city where Joseph Seixas resides, and there, if he will overlook what I shall confess, fulfil my early contract. How my hand can trace such words, I know not. You are young.

One lovelier, worthier, perhaps even now better loved will console you for the loss of Miriam. 'T were base and wicked, indeed — so Manuel has truly said — to take the advantage of your inexperience, and inflict upon you a Jewish wife. You must not seek, then, — it would be vain, — to bend my purpose. Tomorrow is the Sabbath, and on the day after, we shall be gone. I send you a remembrance of Miriam and her weak love. Keep it for her sake. May the God of Abraham watch over you. Farewell!"

It was all distinctly written. The parcel was a jewel-case, and contained the Turkish dagger. Alban could see Manuel Seixas taking it up deliberately, and fastening his keen Eastern eye on its ruby hilt, and crooked inlaid blade.

What an excitement for the waking hours of the night! Never would our hero be outdone in generosity by Miriam Seixas! Never abandon to desolation that noble heart! And Mary De Groot? Why, she would herself animate him to every act of energetic fidelity. Alban possessed the characteristic daring of a young American, and apart from the visionary schemes to which his imagination was familiarized, was strongly inclined to a career in other lands. That Miriam, once his, would resist his influence in

the matter of religion, was a thing he did not admit for a moment: the only point, then, was to make her his at once. By the laws of New York, a simple contract, duly witnessed, was a valid marriage; and although it was true that the Church would not (as he understood) recognise such an union, with a disparity of faith, or approve of it in any case, still, he was not yet precisely a Catholic.

Alban was strongly tempted (his knowledge of the mansion in State street putting it, he thought, in his power) to obtain an interview with Miriam that very night, and settle the whole affair. The night was the time for the meeting and for the flight alike, especially the night of the Sabbath, when the Hebrew family would certainly not be kept up, either by domestic avocations, or by preparations for the contemplated voyage; while Miriam herself, it was more than probable, would be keeping a vigil of tears and bitter thoughts.

Once he threw on his cloak, determined to go forth and carry his project into effect, in which, if he had persevered, the whole course of this history would have been entirely changed; for at that very moment Miriam stood by her window, in the violent recoil after the great renunciation she had achieved, watching if haply the closely-mantled figure of her lover

appeared on the snowy walk of the lonely Battery:— but a thought (it was constantly recurring) drew him back from afar. The sweet and pure image of Mary De Groot rose up before him. It restrained him, made him shrink from his own intentions and wishes, as from an unholy scheme. He drew her precious little note from his bosom and read it. “No,” thought he, throwing off the cloak again, “this affair must be differently managed. An enterprise, (as Miriam herself said,) which, if any thing, is one of piety and manly honour, must not be conducted like an act of treason. I will see Mary first, and ask her sisterly counsel and aid. She will give me both, I doubt not.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALBAN slept soundly for six hours. Nowadays, when you want a light all night, you turn down the gas to a blue, imperceptible flame; but in '35, our hero's lamp was burning on the hearth. He took his watch from the pocket purchased of Mary at the New Haven fair. It was half-past five, and he sprang out of bed. There was no flowing Croton then, and, in our turn, we have almost forgotten the mahogany lavatory, with its service of blue porcelain. It was a cold morning, and the ewer became full of ice the instant Atherton moved it. Hot-water pipes have put an end also to that: still, there was a generous hardihood in it which we half regret.

Alban dressed and sallied forth, bending his course

to the cathedral, somewhat distant. It had snowed again in the night, and a gusty wind had whirled the sleet into drifts. Over head, it was clear and starry, and the morning star glittered in the southeast with a brilliancy which must be seen to be appreciated. On account of the weather, mass was said in the chapel, more easily warmed than the church. The congregation, although it was not any particular day, (as the phrase is,) quite filled it.

When Alban arrived, the vestry door was open, and the confessional was visible, with a priest hearing the confession of a woman. After hearing three or four, he took off his stole and left the box; the rest were obliged to wait, and he soon came out vested for mass. A considerable number of persons received communion. It was over in half an hour; the congregation partly dispersed; but a second had come in, and the same process was repeated; and now the confessions were going on without intermission. Alban waited. He did not perceive Mary, and began to think that the snow had prevented her coming. He was surprised, at the communion in the second mass, to observe her among the females returning from the altar. She resumed her place in a remote corner, and he perceived that she had been there when he arrived. She stayed through the third mass,

and directly it was over, went out, accompanied by Margaret Dolman, evidently not aware of Alban's presence. He joined them in the street. The two girls made their way with difficulty through the drifts and against the gusty wind.

Atherton took Miss De Groot's arm familiarly, and helped her along: "Really, Miss Mary, you ought not to walk on such a morning as this."

"Mr. Alban!" with a pleased surprise, and she went on, struggling with the snow and wind.

A covered sleigh stood ready harnessed before the livery stable in Houston street; Alban ran forward and engaged it to take them home. In a minute it had dashed through the drift, and drew up jingling at the young lady's side.

"How very kind you are, Mr. Alban!"

He handed them in, and paid the driver in advance, as if Miss De Groot had been a little girl. She thanked him in a simple, cordial manner, and asked him to ride.

"My way lies in another direction, you know," with a strange, thoughtful glance, which she afterwards remembered. "Yet I wish to see you to-day, Miss Mary. At what hour shall I find you disengaged?"

"At any hour which is convenient for you," with

great sweetness. "I shall stay at home all day to finish some work. Come when you like."

"It will be in the afternoon, then; as early as I can make it."

The young heiress began to expect her friend at twelve. At half-past four she was still expecting him. The south-west drawing-room began to grow dusk, for the day had become overcast, with spells of snowing. Since Mary's return home this apartment had acquired an aspect of feminine inhabitation which it did not possess previously. There were flowers on the stands; the piano was open; a cozy group of seats had got formed in the corner where the young lady worked, between the fire, glowing in its mantel of statuary, and the richly curtained south window, with its balcony of stone overlooking the street, hereafter to become so beautiful. At this time Mary could see all the way down the Avenue. She was at work on some strange little garments of muslin. Not to affect mystery where there is none, we may say that they were baby's shirts, which Miss De Groot was making for a poor woman who lived in a shanty on one of the Avenues. Through Margaret, she was rich in cases of real want of the most touching kind. She had finished a certain number of the little things, which were neatly folded and laid in a pile

on a dark rosewood workstand. Close by stood an embroidery frame, with an incipient chalice-veil stretched upon it, and the bright silks for working it lay ready sorted on a tabouret. It was clearly the young lady's intent to change her other work for this, and hide the former, as soon as her friend should come in sight.

At last, when it was so dark that she had already put away the baby garments, a cab came up the Avenue. There was a ring—a gentle ring which she knew—and presently Atherton came into the room. She did not rise to greet him, and he came to her cozy corner. They shook hands in friendly fashion, and Alban dropped familiarly into a chair.

Had Miss De Groot been at work, he would probably have begun by some commonplace observation, but it was not light enough even for embroidery, and she sat playing with the pencil that hung at her waist. He alluded at once to her kind reply to his letter of confession.

"I feared that you would feel so disappointed in me," he said.

Mary waited some time before answering. "You Puritans are so self-righteous. You can't bear to be thought weak like others."

"That's the way you view it?"

"Certainly. It has given me great hopes of you to learn that your self-complacency had received a wound," with a smile. "I was quite discouraged about you, Alban."

"I believe I showed my irritated pride, rather than virtue, in that part of my conduct which at the time I thought most commendable."

"I dare say," said Mary, hastily. She played with her pencil. "Let us not speak of it any more, I pray you, Mr. Alban. I am sorry you thought it necessary to accuse yourself to me at all. I knew you were human without your telling me." And the smile became arch.

"I am going to consult you now in regard to an affair that will be a new proof of my humanity."

"I dare say," replied the young lady, her dark eyes gleaming with witchery in that blended fire and twilight.

"I must premise," said Alban, with some confusion, "that I have got over my Jewish notions."

"I am glad to hear it."

"I believe you would say that pride and earthliness were behind the fact of so strange an aberration."

"I don't know. Father Smith says that sincere and humble persons who have never known the truth, may wander very strangely in seeking it."

"I had sincerity enough, but precious little humility, I am afraid."

"God has been teaching you, Alban," said Miss De Groot, with awakened interest.

"Indeed, I think so. I am sure there was never any one more unworthy of the gift of faith."

"Do you mean," said Mary, dropping her pencil and leaning forward,—"do you mean that you will be a Catholic?"

There was something in his face which answered her before he said with his lips—"By God's grace."

She uttered a faint cry of joy, sprang up hastily, and, throwing her arms round his neck, kissed him on both cheeks. She sank back immediately upon her low seat, and buried her face in her lap. Alban turned paler than when he read Miriam's letter. He could not say a word, while she sobbed in her apron like a child. She lifted her face at last, glowing red, and dried her eyes, without looking at him.

"The Blessed Virgin has heard my prayers. I knew she would, but I did not expect so soon. Tell me how it happened. How did God give you faith?"

"It was this morning at the mass in which you

received communion, that I was first able to say with all my heart — *I believe.*”

“I offered my communion for your conversion,” said Mary, in a quiet, natural tone.

“Did you?” replied he, quite in the same, as if not at all surprised. “Why, I went to a Presbyterian prayer-meeting last night and took a part,” laughing and blushing, (not at Presbyterian prayer-meetings — of course not, but at his own ludicrous inconsistency.) “But as soon as I got into the chapel this morning, (I came there full of anything else,) and knelt down, pretty much, I think, with the intention of acting like others, but feeling tolerably sure, too, that there was at least nothing wrong in it, an indescribable certainty stole over me that this was the true, divine religion. I envied the poor people going to confession; the Presence in the Tabernacle penetrated me with awe, and the image of our Lady with the Child, above it, carried me back to Bethlehem. I saw as clearly as could be, that, let the world think as it might, He was here, the same as there, in a form of weakness, but still the Almighty Saviour of Israel. I had concluded thus before from mere reasoning, you understand, nay, I had *said* it, but now I saw it. I heard the first mass in that state of mind. And yet, do you know, all the while I

was uncertain what I should do in consequence, or how long I should retain this clear conviction. I felt as if I just saw into the other world, but what would happen when the vision vanished, was beyond me. There was an obstacle—something to be given up—a great deal to be given up; more particularly the power of deciding upon my own conduct in a certain case where my feelings, my interests, my honour as a gentleman, and every thing I held dear in this world, were concentrated. I felt as powerless, Mary, to surrender my own settled plan on this point, as to lift the cathedral from its base. I *knew* that I should go on with it as I had determined, and as I wished, even if Hell-fire were before me, as the inevitable end of the path I had chosen. Even now my feelings are as strong as ever, but my resolve is changed. And this happened in the second mass. The priest read so distinctly that I could follow a great deal of it, and the gospel, rapidly as he articulated, sank like molten lead into my heart—‘If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me. For he who will save his life shall lose it, but he who shall lose his life for my sake shall save it. For what doth it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange

for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then will He render to every man according to his works.’”

“I remember of thinking of you as I followed it in my missal,” said Mary, with evident awe.

“The rest of that mass passed in a struggle with myself. I knelt down again, after the gospel, with the rest; I joined in the worship of the people as far as I understood it; I adored at the elevation, but with the dreadful feeling that when I looked at last without a veil upon His face who was then lifted up, it might be a face of wrath for me. After the elevation, I began to pray earnestly, until the perspiration, notwithstanding the coldness of the chapel, ran down my body in streams. I appealed to Mary, the Gate of Heaven and refuge of sinners, as she is called in that beautiful litany you showed me the other day. Then you all went up to communion, (although I had no idea of your being there,) and the whole thing flashed upon me again. For the love of a woman—a mere creature, and of a fallen race, a fair corruption, whose body would soon be dust, and her soul, without faith, go down to eternal night—would I forego the sweetness of the Creator!” —Mary clasped her hands.—“For one mad draught from that earthly fountain, would I lose the beatific

vision, and never know what it was to possess and enjoy God! 'O my Author and my End,' I exclaimed, 'take from me every thing which Thou hast made, but give me Thyself.'"

Mary had listened with mixed feelings to this burst. After some little delay, several things being said which were of little importance, she inquired what it was that brought him to mass.

"This very affair in regard to which I still wish to ask your sisterly advice."

He drew from his pocket a letter, which the reader will not be slow to identify, observing that it would put her in possession of the facts. He thought that, under the circumstances, he was justified in showing it to *her*.

Mary received Miriam's letter with a grave, curious face, glancing first at the feminine superscription of the envelope. She turned towards the fire to read it, spreading it open in her lap. Before she began, however, covering it with both her hands, she looked up to Alban and said—"Is it from Miss Clinton?, — Oh, it is not!"—with a relieved air—"I asked, because if it had been, I should have been unwilling — but no matter."

Thus saying, she began to read. Blank astonishment was first depicted on her countenance. As she

went on, leaning on the elbow, she shaded her face with one hand, and the other stole softly to her heart. She perused the letter evidently more than once, seeming, by the motion of the eye, to dwell on particular expressions. She remained a good while after, as in thought, with her eyes closed; but when she addressed Alban, it was with a countenance quite free from emotion. She laid her finger on a passage of the letter.

"I understand from this that you have proposed to Miss Seixas?"

"Precisely," said Alban.

"She is contracted to another person—is she?"

"A cousin—a Jew," replied Alban, dropping on one knee by Miss De Groot's side, and looking over the letter still spread in her lap.

"There is another ottoman, Alban."

He drew it near her and sat down.

"I don't see what you can do in such a case," said Mary. "She is going somewhere with her brother, to be married to this cousin, of her own faith,—isn't she? And that will be the end of it."

"Unless I can contrive to see her before she goes, and induce her to change her mind again."

"Is that what you propose?" asked Miss De

Groot, with some quickness, turning very pale, and giving him back the letter.

"I will presently tell you. You must know that I have ascertained that Miss Seixas is going to Smyrna. They sail in a Spanish bark, the *Manuel*, with as ugly a looking crew, and desperado-looking captain, as you would wish to see. Now it is easy to foresee that when they reach Smyrna, which is a voyage of not less than seven or eight weeks, and maybe longer, and Miriam finds herself among her own people, she will marry Joseph Seixas. I cannot abandon her thus without a struggle," said Alban, with a resolute air. "If I cannot obtain an interview with her before her departure, in which I may fairly try the experiment of combating a resolution, which, you must have observed by her letter, springs in part from womanly pride and a sense of justice to me — I say, unless I can obtain such an interview — I am resolved to make this voyage with them. To let a woman from whom I have obtained a confession of love, go away to misery here and hereafter, without an effort — a strenuous effort — to save her, comports neither with my principles nor with my feelings. What think you?"

Mary kept her eyes on the carpet, except when she gave Alban now and then a glance of surprise.

"How old are you, Alban?"

"Just twenty," replied the youth.

"You have tried to see Miss Seixas to-day?"

"I went to the house and was refused admittance. Miriam sent down word by her maid that she was particularly engaged and could not see me. After that, I found Seixas at the synagogue. He was mild as possible, but inexorable. He said that Miriam was free, and had a right to refuse me an interview. On his part, he considered it her duty, and therefore he could not be expected to interfere, even for my sake. He was deaf, in short, to my entreaties, and only smiled at my threats; for I got very angry at his immoveable obstinacy in sacrificing his sister's soul and happiness."

"Why don't you go to a priest," said Mary, "and impart every thing to him under the seal of confession? He will tell you exactly what to do."

Alban shook his head. She gently took the letter from him again, and her face, which had been pale, became deeply flushed.

"I should be sorry to seem unwilling to act the part of a sister and friend, when you appeal to me in that character. But how can I advise, not knowing all the circumstances? In your note to me, you accused yourself of some mysterious folly. It had nothing

to do with Miss Seixas?"—"No, no; she is innocent as nature can be."—"I thought so. Well, I will tell you what I think: that Mr. Seixas, considering he is a Jew, is very kind and wise—more so than most Christians would be in like circumstances, Alban; and that Miss Seixas's conduct is noble and dignified—like a true-hearted woman,"—with gentle warmth. "But her passions must be naturally violent. True, she is not to blame for that. Still, dear Alban, the less any of us have to do with poniards, the better. She has permitted herself to love you, although she was already betrothed. That is what I least like. It must have been voluntary in part; all love is. I must say that my notions of fidelity between plighted, or conscious, lovers, do not allow *any* deliberate thought of that kind about another person."

She spoke in a rapid, unpremeditated, earnest sort of way, as a girl naturally talks. Alban shaded his eyes, and seemed lost in thought.

"I need not a priest's counsel in this matter," he said at length. "No priest can tell me what I want to know."

Mary bent over the letter as if it could tell her what Mr. Alban wanted to know. She murmured, rather shyly, that it was strange he should want to know any thing but what he must know better than

any one—the state of his own affections. It seemed to her a very wild idea though—that of his going with the Seixases to the East against their will—leaving his college—he such a youth. Where would he get the funds for such a voyage?

He explained to her that he had some money left him by an aunt, and that even as a minor he could easily obtain an advance on it from the Jews. An old Israelite had promised him a sum which he deemed sufficient.

“You will be betrayed by these people, Alban. It makes me shudder to think of that dreadful Spanish captain and his crew. How do you know that they are not pirates? or slavers, which is just as bad?” She began to cry.

Alban was provided with an answer also to this. It was true that piracy was then not unknown in the American seas, and he conjectured that this Spanish shipmaster had been at least in the African trade; but he was a devout Catholic. In his cabin hung a picture of the Holy Virgin, with a lamp perpetually burning. In short, it was by appealing to his religious feelings, that Alban had obtained from him the information in regard to the movements of the Seixases. The skipper and he had made a conditional bargain.

“If I can obtain her previous consent, I am to

be on board when they come to the vessel in the morning. The skipper will then haul up the ladies first—that is, Miriam and her maid. As soon as they are on deck, instead of lowering the ladder down for Manual Seixas, the boat in which they come is to be dropped loose, and we shall make our way out to sea with what promises to be a most favourable wind. Now the question is, shall I, in the interview which I have the means of securing, simply ask her consent to this plan of a mutual flight, saying nothing of a change of faith, or shall I make the latter a prerequisite? Without vanity, I think that, could I see Miriam, I should infallibly succeed on the former plan, and should almost certainly fail by taking the latter alternative.”

“I dare say,” said Mary, changing from pale to red by turns.

“When Miriam is under my protection—after having broken thus irrevocably with her own people and family—she will be readily won, I doubt not, by my arguments and entreaties, to embrace the Christian faith.”

“Say no more on that point,” interrupted Miss De Groot, almost passionately. “I am sure, that not even to save Miss Seixas’s soul, ought you to persuade her to elope with you as a Jewess. It would be a sin

on your part, and shame to her. You cannot go to her except to persuade her to be a Christian."

"So I think," said Alban, "but shall I use the means which I possess of obtaining an interview for that purpose before to-morrow's light? For it must be by night—nor sooner than midnight—and by means of a step which, for any other end, would be unjustifiable. Still, that is not the point. Would you have me make the attempt under the properest circumstances?"

The dinner-bell rang. A glance at the mantel-clock showed the hour of six.

"You must stay and dine with us," said Mary, with a bewildered look; "it will give me time to think."

With the natural manners of American life, the young lady herself, calm and silent, conducted Alban to an apartment where he could freshen his morning toilet, as well as circumstances allowed. A servant came in to help him, and preceded him down stairs; and just as he arrived at the door of the dining-room, a step, like a bird on the wing, came down the last flight. She was in her wonted evening array, without a trace of haste or negligence. Mr. De Groot was ever enlivened by Alban's presence. He ordered a bottle of champagne to be put in the cooler. Our

young hero, who begins to be more heroic than heretofore, (though we scarcely understand his intentions in all this,) was not sorry, like his predecessors since Homer, to renovate his energies by a stimulating repast, after a day of labour and excitement.

CHAPTER XIX.

DINNER lasted about an hour, Mr. De Groot indulging in an extra glass of wine, and displaying a cheerful courtesy. Mrs. De Groot inquires respecting "the state of feeling" in Dr. M.'s congregation, having understood that the last night's prayer-meeting was one of "special interest." Alban is self-possessed, occasionally gives in to a concealed humour in answering the questions of Madame. Mademoiselle regards him with wonder, sometimes smiles in spite of herself, and sends away her plate almost untouched.

The half-hour after the ladies have withdrawn (Mr. De Groot adheres to that old custom) passes slowly, although the host wakes into animation, and

wondering at Alban's apparent disgust for champagne, regrets again and again that the vacation is so nearly at an end. Then comes tea in the drawing-room, and the card-table set with candles and counters, and two fresh packs. The patroon claims his rubber on account of Alban's being there.

"After which, Mary (I see her impatience) may take you into any snug corner she likes. I declare, Atherton, I believe I shall miss you as much as she will."

Miss De Groot, having employed the interval between dinner and tea to visit her own room, had regained her serenity: still, she revoked in the first hand, and thereby lost the game; whereat her father, being her partner, was irritated, and talked of people being so much in love that they could not mind their cards. Mademoiselle blushed a little, and became more attentive; they won the rubber, which restored the patroon's good humour.

"Now take Mr. Alban where you please, child. The library has a fire, and is a famous place for *tête-à-têtes*. Please to consider, Atherton, that I give in to this New England custom, on the ground of your being too thorough-bred a Knickerbocker to abuse the concession."

The young lady flitted before him. The library

was darkish and light by fits, as the flickering fire of Liverpool coal allowed, and Mary, after a glance at the sentimental locale, passed on to the lobby, which she had once pointed out to Alban as fit for the interviews of lovers. It was worse than the library, but she stopped there, going to the oriel as the lightest spot; for the only illumination came from a street lamp, through the stained glass, shedding a mystic, patchwork beam upon the dark wainscoting. It sufficed to render visible on the young lady's face the reserved expression natural to one of her sex who remembered that her companion had so recently enjoyed similar interviews with others; and presently she put her handkerchief to her eyes and wept—a still, silent shower of tears that soon wet through the cambric.

“How can I give my sisterly advice,” she suddenly exclaimed, with a sort of gentle passion, “when I am a party interested. Really, Alban, your coming to me about this, is the most indelicate thing I ever heard of.”

“Mary!”

“If you run away with Miss Seixas, every body will say that you have jilted *me*. Papa will be very angry. Now let me finish; don't speak, Alban, till I have said all I have got to say. I have never

formed any false notions myself in regard to your friendship. I knew all along that you considered me as a little girl. Because you are such a scholar, and take the lead, in college, of men grown, you seem to yourself very mature: whereas in society, you are only a youth, a boy under age, a college student, which is nothing at all;—a girl like Henrietta Clinton thinks she can twist you round her little finger; and nobody else would have taken any notice of you, unless they had supposed, from your appearing with us, that I had been so silly as to engage myself, before I am seventeen, to an undergraduate. Now *I* am a young lady in society—girl as I am—and if I were to be married in six months, people might say it was a pity, but no one would think it strange. 'T was but yesterday that the *Count* called on papa, with Mr. Seixas to back his representations of his family and fortune, and made proposals for me in the foreign way; and papa told him he did not wish me to marry out of my own country, and, besides, that my affections, he believed, were already engaged. You see, Mr. Alban, how the case stands. Papa took a fancy to you from the first. I saw by the way he acted and talked, that Sunday evening at Mr. Everett's, and by his choosing to go down with you to New York, instead of staying a

few days, and then by his turning me over to you on the steamboat, that his mind was made up to have you for a son. I am sure you have every reason to be flattered by his partiality. I observe, indeed, that other people, who have experience, like you; and, for myself, it seems to me quite natural they should; but I never dreamed of your doing such a thing as to fall seriously in love with a Jewess, who is espoused to another person, and audaciously winning her affection, (she must be very susceptible,) and proposing to elope with her, and that at the moment when you profess to have been converted to the Catholic faith. Least of all could I dream that you would come to ask my advice on the subject. All this is strange to me, Alban, and places you in a perfectly new light. It makes me almost wish I had never known you, and quite that I had never given you so many marks of an affection, which, I take Heaven to witness, a sister, so far as I know, might have felt without blame."

"And yet, if I had come hither," observed the young man, (somewhat to the purpose,)—"had I come hither to-night, just as I was when we parted night before last at Mrs. Clinton's,—Protestant, sceptic, Jew perhaps,—and proposed to you, (to use the

simplest kind of words,) you would have refused me: isn't it so?"

"Undoubtedly," said Mary.

"Very well, I *knew* that. Need I say any more in my own defence?" he continued with spirit. "Yes, by my honour as a gentleman, I will. It was only when I felt myself unworthy of *you*, but in the moment when a very fascinating object—you will allow that—was in my reach, and a thousand feelings of which you know nothing inspired me to seize it, (for a man's heart, Mary, is not a little chess-board of fine sentiments,)—it was *then* that I first had the grace to say to Miriam Seixas, 'Be a Christian—be a Catholic—and I am yours.' You know the rest; and all that I want now is simply to act like a man of my word, and a true knight:—so that you need not blush for your friend."

"Oh, for the world I would not have you wanting in devotion where you have spoken words of love; or seem unknightly—for you never could be so in reality, I am sure," said Mary, upon whom a faint light began to break.

"That's it. Now what does true knighthood require in this instance, my sweet sister, I pray?"

"See her again," said Mary, "if, as you say, you can command an interview. Try to persuade

her to become a Christian. Ah! could I see her, I think I could say things. Remind her of that women's gallery where we were cooped up apart in the synagogue. If you succeed, bring her to me. I will receive her as a sister. She can stay with me till you have graduated, and are of age. Then you can be married. I will be bridesmaid and all that," said she quickly, "and as happy as Miss Seixas herself."

"Well, I give up the voyage plan, then. You see it was only in the alternative of my not daring to see her, or not being able, that I contemplated it. To see her first, and then carry her off in that way, was an after thought."

"A foolish thought," Mary murmured. What would his parents say? Any clergyman would tell him that it was sinful, in such matters, to act without their advice and consent. Then the rashness! It had made her wonder to hear him talk of a voyage in the company of that beautiful Jewess—so ardent and impulsive; and, indeed, it was very strange to her, altogether, that a mind so calm and clear, as she had always considered his, should entertain such extravagant ideas!

"But you yourself sanction my using the means I have to obtain a midnight interview with Miriam?

And yet there is no little peril in that too, peril of all sorts."

At that the young lady, quiet for a moment, put her handkerchief again to her eyes, and fairly sobbed: her bosom heaved like little waves that dash in the moonlight against a rocky shore. Our hero (for the thing was now serious indeed) made no attempt to soothe her; but only gazed at her with a pallid, breathless look, muttering "Fool, fool, fool!" to himself. An opinion in which we entirely coincide, and are almost disposed to add a harsher term, for his having inflicted such a wound on a tender, faithful, pure heart.

But though she wept, from mortification, or from some other feeling into which it befits us not to inquire, (Alban did not,) she did not lose her dignity.

"That is an inevitable danger," said she, drying her eyes, and looking up in his face for a moment, as if to read there the calm, kind, fraternal expression that she expected. "You *must* show yourself a gallant gentleman, — hap what may."

"And what return shall I make for your kindness?" said Alban. Something he felt was due to this blameless friend, whose pride, if not her affection, he had wounded, yet who showed no resentment.

He sank on one knee and took her hand. She tried to withdraw it, but did not till he had kissed it. "I have been far from a true knight, Mary, but you are the truest of ladies ever heard of—the tenderest and most forgiving mistress that ever was. The only return I *can* make is to ask you to love and pray for me as heretofore, and one of these days, perhaps, I may be more worthy of you."

She bade him good-night in a less composed voice, and moved shyly towards the door of the private stair. She paused with her hand on the lock.

"Be faithful to your religion, Mr. Alban. No human respects will now be mixed with it. And pray for me when you have been received into the Church."

She opened the door quietly and stole up the stair. He listened till the sound of her steps was lost in the corridor of the story above

CHAPTER XX.

ON the paved walk of the Battery, which runs along the water, the hero reconnoitres the house in State street from a prudent distance. The covered sleigh which conveyed him the whole length of the city hither, waits at the corner of State and Whitehall.

The mansion was dark from cellar to attic, except only one window of the apartment which, he knew, (how his heart beat!) belonged to Miriam. From that window alone, by a half-open shutter, came a faint glimmer of candle or lamp light, struggling through the tall plants of the conservatory with which the balcony was filled in.

To climb that balcony is the hero's firm resolve.

'Tis not difficult; for 'tis two-storied, with large white columns, a railing on the lower story, and lamp-irons above: to an agile youth like Alban the feat is easy as talking. His next operation will be to tap, lightly, lightly, on the pane of the conservatory sash. Passion is quick-eared and slumbers lightly. Miriam hath not retired—else why the gleam from her window? She anticipates this nocturnal attempt, beyond a doubt. She will hear the tap, tap, tap, on the conservatory pane; she will come to her window quickly:—to the tenderness and curiosity of woman he intrusts the rest. She will listen to his arguments, (how much more forcible will they be now?) she will yield to his urgent entreaties; tip-toe, she will steal down to the front-door; the covered sleigh approaches and whisks her off; in an hour she is with Mary De Groot:—there Alban suppressed a sigh.

Approaching the house from Whitehall, at the corner he meets a watchman, who throws the light of his lantern full in his face; and the moment after, the guardian of the night makes his staff ring thrice on the frosty pavement. Alban arrives at the old marble stoop, and whom should he find in the lower balcony or vestibule, leaning against one of the white columns, but—Manuel Seixas, in a great cloak?

This was an unexpected turn; but Manuel was too old a hand not to have anticipated so obvious a move as young Atherton's. With a great deal of courtesy he invited the somewhat disconcerted Alban into the house; and our undaunted hero, considering that this was one point gained, and remembering what Mary De Groot had said about the necessity of being a "gallant gentleman," went in accordingly.

"Leave your hat and cloak in the hall," said Manuel, and Atherton wondered that he spoke in so loud a tone at that late hour. Likewise, Seixas contrived to make a considerable clatter with the hat-stand.

Manuel took him into the back drawing-room, which had been the scene of the interview with Miriam. The silver lamps of this singular apartment were all lighted, (showing that the obscurity of the front of the house was a detestable ruse,) and shed a vivid illumination, notwithstanding the dark, absorbent hue of the draperies; while every bright spot of colour or gilding, on the quaint walls, absolutely glittered. A magnificent hickory fire blazed away on the andirons. Seixas, inviting our hero to be seated, himself took a chair near the glowing hearth, with a manifest shiver.

We must not forget to mention that the curtains

were all drawn; and particularly the great purple velvet one of the folding-doors was let down, sombre and rich, to the carpet.

"Of a man of gallantry and spirit like yourself, one expects such things," observed Seixas. "So you see, I was on my guard."

"It is true," replied Alban frankly, "that if you had not been waiting out there, I should by this time have given Miriam at least the opportunity of seeing me once more. Her own heart must have decided whether to do so or not."

"You meant to scale the balcony?" said Manuel, eyeing him from head to foot.

"Undoubtedly: but I could not have entered it, as you know, without her connivance and aid."

"True; it is glazed in. But how did you expect to inform her of your presence?"

"If *you* could divine the probability of my coming, how much more would she?" replied our hero.

"It was a bold undertaking, and might have cost you your life," observed Seixas.

"I am not ignorant of the fanaticism which is latent in the Jewish character," replied Alban, shortly, "and that is why I determined that your sister should not be sacrificed to it, if I could help it."

"Hush! have a care what you say," returned

Manuel in a low voice, and looking him fixedly in the face.

Alban understood this as a threat, and merely threw one leg over the other, with a kind of impatient defiance. Manuel regarded him angrily.

"I have not watched for you, Atherton," said he, in a softer tone, at last, "because I doubt Miriam, or wish to force her inclinations. She is free to become a Christian and marry you, if she likes; though I would rather see her dead. My object is to save her from a cruel deception."

"Deception!"

"Yes. What is it ~~has~~ fascinated her in you? It is the idea of being beloved by you. This has rendered you irresistible. These Western loves! Every Oriental woman has the idea in her heart. But is it a just idea in this case? Do you love her in fact?"

"My coming hither to-night—"

"Proves merely your chivalry, or your proselyting zeal, or perhaps the strength of your passions—"

"Depend upon it," cried Alban, "I love Miriam far too well for that!"

"Be it so. I believe you when you say it. My conviction is, nevertheless, that you love another better. Yet it is only the supposition, or rather the

hope, that you love her above all others, and that to obtain her is really your dearest earthly wish, that gives you any power over her. Now, then, if this be not so, be generous, Atherton! be just! Depart as an honoured friend from our house, which you have caused us to quit. Let that withdrawal, and not your own lips, convince my sister of the bitter truth which, more than any thing else, will reconcile her to her lot—the lot of all the females of her race.”

Atherton now felt sure, not only that this *was* the consideration which Seixas had successfully urged upon his sister's pride, but that if she were convinced of his devotion, of which the step he was taking gave so striking a proof, she would still decide in his favour, and that Manuel knew it. To say that Alban, once engaged in the affair, did not pursue it with his whole soul, would be doing him great injustice. He was not so cold-hearted; but, on the contrary, had such a temperament as made him eager to succeed in whatever he undertook.

“I love Miriam ardently,” said he, with a deep flush overspreading his face.

“I comprehend you,” replied Seixas quickly. “She is a beloved woman, but not the preferred of your heart. An Oriental can understand that.”

This was a home-thrust. Our young hero could not, with all his eagerness, say that Miriam was the preferred of his heart. That would be a lie.

"I never felt for any other woman," said he, faltering, "what I experience for her, when the thought comes up that she may be mine. And yet—I'll not deceive you, Seixas—there is another, whose image, though paler and fainter in my fancy, entwines itself with deeper roots of my nature; my love for whom is pure as a brother's, but surpasses every other sentiment I ever knew or imagined, in the perfect veneration, the boundless tenderness, I feel for the lovely being who is the object of it. But I cannot dream of *her* as a wife, or even more distantly, as a mistress:—she is too sacredly innocent for such thoughts."

Seixas listened eagerly, with a smile of mingled mortification and triumph. He seemed angry, and yet to feel that he had gained a point.

"You Christians have these refinements of love," said he, shrugging his shoulders, "which we cannot understand. It amounts to what I said just now, that in your thoughts of women, my sister holds only the second place. She would be miserable with you."

"Where fidelity exists," said Alban, "and both look forward to the life to come, there cannot be

misery. If Miriam will only be a *Christian*, we may be happy. Perhaps that is the only thing which is wanting to complete her inward beauty in my eyes. Let me see her, Seixas, for only half an hour, and try to persuade her of it."

At this, a loud noise was heard in the adjoining room;—the voices of men in deep, angry, muttering chorus; the heavy velvet curtain, as Atherton sprang to his feet, was pulled up with two furious jerks; and nearly a dozen infuriated male Jews rushed impetuously into the apartment, with cries of rage, and made a dash upon our hero.

"Kill de rascal!" they shouted, in every variety of stunning cadence.

"If any one harms the lad," cried Seixas, whose calm demeanour changed at once to concentrated violence, "his blood be on his own head; I will shoot him like a dog;"—drawing from his bosom one of those precious little instruments, which, in the click of an eye, send a poor mortal to the Land of Shades.

Atherton had sprung to the wall opposite the fireplace, and seized a chair, which he held lifted, ready to fell to the earth the first man that approached him.

"Raskle!" shouted the incensed Hebrews, "de dem raskle! He will persuade de young ladies to leave

dere religion! He will persuade de young Jewish lady to break fait' and marry him—de ugly dog!"

They formed an appalling circle; some seized chairs, some brandished knives. Atherton's uplifted chair and Manuel's pistol held them in check; but one or two fellows, very powerful and sinister-looking, whom Alban remembered to have seen at the synagogue when he was disputing with Seixas in the morning, evidently only waited for an opportunity to rush in upon him with a deadly purpose.

In the midst of this scene, so sudden, and as terrific as ludicrous, but which no one who knows the latent ferocity and fanaticism of the Jews, will judge to be either improbable or exaggerated, the door leading to the servants' stair flew open, with a slight scream and cry of "Señorita!" and Miriam, followed closely by Rebecca, from whom she appeared to be escaping, darted into the room, passed through the circle of Alban's assailants, and in a moment stood by his side. Her long black hair, as if just unbraided, streamed over her shoulders, from which a fur-lined pelisse or mantle, in which she was wrapped, had partly fallen, showing them white and statue-like (from the contrast with that waving darkness) in the vivid light of the lamps and fire. The men fell back a step.

"The evil eye light upon you all!" said Miriam.

"The malediction of Satan be the portion of your mother's children!"

The Jews evidently cowered under her curses. Alban slowly lowered the chair, keeping his eye steadily upon the frowning yet daunted ring of his foes. Miriam was like a young lioness, or any other image of female wrath and courage. Her brilliant beauty, her wild-soft womanliness, (that august quality which subdues the most savage hearts,) and her lofty attitude, unconscious of fear, although her fair arms (one outstretched with a repellant gesture) were her only weapons, except that sharp tongue and eye of feminine fierceness, protected her beloved from the rage of her tribe.

"Who dares say that Miriam Seixas is unfaithful to the laws or to the God of Israel?" she exclaimed. "But you are cowards. You would murder an unarmed youth, whose only crime is to have loved our people. You shall never strike him except through my bosom."

She put one arm round Alban. Waving the other haughtily, she advanced towards the circle of men. They fell back before her. Rebecca, darting forward, furiously pushed out of the way one or two of the men, who, encountered thus by women, seemed struck with surprise and unable to act.

"Fly, Alban!" Miriam whispered, as they gradually approached the door; "fly, while I keep these wretches at bay: they are capable of taking your life."

"I cannot fly, Miriam, without thee. I will stay and die, rather," said the youth, trying to face his foes, but drawn along by her loving violence.

"No, no; I have overheard all. That is entirely over. Do not delay for any silly scruples. I am safe. For the sake of your——Mary, save yourself. Indeed, these men are ruffians, in their present mood capable of any thing. For a moment only they are mastered. Fly!"

Alban turned and embraced her:—he could not part without that. There was a yell of fury. In the midst of it,—how, he knew not,—but with Miriam, Manuel, Rebecca, all confusedly hurrying through the hall, and surrounding him, he gained the front door. In a minute more, without even whispering "Farewell," he had sprung over the rail of the old stoop, and lighted in the snow.

There was still some obscure struggling, and louder threats within, for Seixas had shut the door upon him. Alban waited, determined not to go without an assurance of Miriam's safety. He shouted to his sleigh-driver to approach, and the latter, already on the

qui vive, came dashing up with good will. The watchman also came up. While he still lingered, impatiently listening to the loud altercation which continued in the hall, Miriam's window was opened. Rebecca came out, undid a sash of the conservatory, and flung out his hat and cloak.

"All is right," cried she. "My mistress is safe in her own room. Farewell, señor! you are a gallant *caballero*."

"Stay, Rebecca!" cried Atherton. "A parting kiss from you too, and a slight token of my gratitude."

With these words he sprang again upon the stoop, and, with a few vigorous efforts, swung himself up to the balcony.

"Be quick, señor!" said Rebecca, drawing back from the threatened salute, but extending her palm for the promised gratuity.

"Ask your mistress to speak to me for one second, and it shall be of gold," whispered he. "Nay, do as I say, or I will enter and speak to her whether you will or not."

Miriam herself cut short the discussion by coming forward, from the window where she was listening. She was now closely involved in the large mantle, as Alban could perceive.

"Go, Rebecca," said the latter, putting the gold-piece into the girl's still extended palm; and Rebecca went, withdrawing into her mistress's apartment.

"I do not ask you now to fly with *me*, or for *my* sake, Miriam," said Alban, "but still I implore you to fly,—to the protection of Mary De Groot, who sends you an invitation with her love. Remember, she bade me say to you, your conversation with her in the gallery of the synagogue. Deliver yourself from the degradation to which Judaism condemns your sex. I no longer offer you the bribe of earthly love, but only freedom and truth, and woman's personal dignity, and emancipation from an humiliating bond."

"Did Miss De Groot send me that message?"

"By my life, she did. But there is no time to lose. Slip down, just as you are, to the cellar-door, and while these miserable fellows below are raging and disputing, we shall be far away, and in safety."

"No, Señor Alban. The time is past for flight with you. I gave my word to Manuel that if he would convince me you really did not love me as I fondly dreamed, (ah! why did you mislead me, Señor Alban?) I would go with him to Syria. Thank Miss De Groot for me. I appreciate her noble kindness; but I am not convinced by her arguments, since I

know that Israel is the chosen people of the Most High, (blessed be He,) and that our day will surely come. Farewell, Señor Alban. You have already embraced me, so it is not necessary to do so now, in the sight of those persons below, who seem waiting for you."

She drew back a step, and bent her head in sign of adieu.

"Must we then part for ever, Miriam? For this world and for the next? Is your resolve unalterable?" faltered Alban.

"It is unalterable," said Miriam, in a voice of deep but tranquil melancholy. "Do not prolong this useless interview, and with it your own danger—for those men below may at any moment come forth."

Rebecca came running. "They are coming out, señor: my master supposing you are gone."

"Farewell, then, once more, noble Miriam, and may the God of Israel indeed protect you."

He swung himself lightly down. At the door of the sleigh, (a barouche on runners,) he turned to salute Miriam once more. She had closed the sash, but stood within, watching him depart, as did Rebecca.

"That's a pretty fast boy," said the watchman to the driver, as the latter mounted the seat, "but he has n't carried off the lady this time."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next day, being Sunday, Alban was confined to the house with a sprain; Monday, the same, and indeed to the sofa, fevered, and moaning with exquisite pain at every movement; Tuesday, better, but ordered to keep quiet; and on Tuesday evening, (the next day was the last of the vacation, and our hero was to return to New Haven, if possible,) the De Groots called.

"How did you meet with this accident?" inquired the patroon, after the first salutations all round.

"Why, you see," said Alban's mother, "his great friend, Mr. Seixas, was going to sail for Smyrna the next day, (those Jews don't mind our Sunday, of course, you know); accompanied by his sister, it

seems; and Alban went to bid them good-bye. So when he comes away, what does he do but jump over the railing of the stoop? (as I remember whipping him for doing, when he was a boy), and he supposes that he strained himself somehow. He was not sensible of it at the time, but the next morning he could hardly stir. Such a foolish fellow!" And his mother, glad that his neck was not broke, sweetly laughed.

"You are better?" inquired Mr. De Groot.

"Nearly well, I assure you. 'Tis quite ridiculous to be keeping the house for such a thing," said the youth, with an air of manly indifference.

So the conversation turned away to other matters. Mr. De Groot talked politics and stocks with Alban's father; Mrs. De Groot entertained his mother with the interminable perverseness of servants, who seem, indeed, to have been created for the annoyance of the rich, and dilapidation of their fortunes, by waste and endless breakage. Then they lie so about it—the unprincipled wretches! But for Scip, Mrs. De Groot would have been an object of pity: but that invaluable negro, who had been born in the family, certainly did save her a world of vexation.

It was inevitable, under these circumstances, that the two young people (their elders being taken up

with each other) should converse by themselves, Mary inquired kindly but timidly about Alban's hurt, which he, of course, made light of. He told her (for she never asked) that he had seen Miriam, who had bidden him thank Miss De Groot for her kind message. "She was inexorable," said he, looking down; and so that subject was dropped. When they took leave, after staying nearly two hours, Mrs. De Groot said something about "Mr. Alban" writing, but Mary (at whom he eagerly looked) only said that he must give her love to Mary Ellsworth.

BOOK V.

THE POWERS OF DARKNESS.



CHAPTER I.

WE must take the reader once more to New Haven, and introduce him or her to the interior of a room in North College, fire-glowing, red-curtained, book-shelved, study-tabled. The student sate in a rocking-chair by the fire, with his feet on the Franklin, his trowsers strapless, his waistcoat unbuttoned, neckcloth laid aside, his dilapidated frock-coat showing the shirt-sleeves at the elbows, and at wide gaps beneath the arms, the buttons off, and the button-holes torn through, and the silk lining completely in tatters. But for two or three other points the young man

would have seemed as great a sloven as could be found in an American college. His morocco slippers were whole and not turned down at the heel; the white cotton stockings protruding from the strapless trousers were spotless as a young lady's, and the linen so liberally displayed by his open waistcoat and gaping elbows, would have dressed an Englishman for a dinner party. But the careless brown locks clustering and curling over the ears, would not have satisfied English precision, notwithstanding the clearness of the brow and cheek they shaded, (with no tinge of sallow from our suns,) and of the well-formed hand half-buried in them, as the student leaned on his elbow.

Being the study-hour, he had in hand a copy of Plato's Republic, (pocket-size,) and a great folio lexicon lay open on the floor, so that he could reach it by stooping a little, as he half reclined in the low chintz-cushioned rocking-chair, which no American collegian is willingly without.

There was a short authoritative rap at the study door, and a gentleman entered, without further warning. The intruder was a man of about thirty, pale, but in good flesh, scrupulously attired in black, with a neat white choker. The tutor's duty is to make such calls, and generally it is absolved by opening

the door, exchanging a bow with the occupants of the room, and retiring. But this gentleman came decidedly in, and the young man (who had jumped to his feet) offered a chair.

"Where is your cousin?"

"Henry is out, calling somewhere, sir."

"I am glad to find you alone. I want to have some conversation with you, Atherton."

Alban had already laid his Plato carelessly on its face upon the lexicon. The Professor took it up.

"You have made beautiful recitations in the Republic I hear, Atherton. It is agreed, I understand, that you are to have the last 'oration.' It is really a higher honour than the valedictory, and all the initiated people present at commencement understand it so. I expect to enjoy your oration, as I enjoy every thing you write."

"You have always been too partial to me, sir."

"You told me last term that you had some difficulties about the evidences of religion. I suppose you have settled that point with yourself, eh?"

"I think so, sir."

"And you are convinced of the truth of revelation, I hope?"

"Quite convinced, sir. I am sorry and ashamed to have ever doubted."

"I am rejoiced to hear you say so," said Professor B——, with emphasis. "In fact, from some things you have let fall in your answers, or some questions you have asked, at the Natural Theology Lecture, Dr. —— got the impression that you were — as he expressed it — a concealed infidel. I told him you were the last man in the world to be a 'concealed' anything. I have always found you frank to a fault. But you did not partake of the sacrament last Sunday, they say, although you were present. Some of our quidnuncs, in fact, are a little excited about you, Atherton. Just give me a word to quiet them. I suppose you are fancying that you are not worthy, or something of that sort."

"I went to chapel with the intention of receiving," said Alban, "but — I did not dare."

"I thought so. Oh, well, you must get over that. It is discreditable to your clear judgment. We are all unworthy, in one sense."

"It was not my unworthiness — great as it is — which deterred me," said Alban, uneasily

"What then?"

"Really, sir, I would rather be excused from answering. It is a matter which I have confined strictly to my own breast."

"That is not wise, my dear Atherton. Really, I

did not suppose that there was this weak spot in your manly organization. I never should have suspected *you* of brooding over these morbid scruples."

"I feel no such scruples as you suppose, sir," said Alban. "I doubt whether the Lord's Supper, as administered among us, is the sacrament at all."

"Oh!" said the Professor, "you have been too much with that weak fellow, Soapstone. You are going to turn Episcopalian, eh, Atherton?"

This was said in a tone of undisguised contempt.

"I am not going to turn Episcopalian, I assure you, sir," said Alban, much annoyed.

"Oh, yes, you are. If you have got doubts into your head about ordination, and apostolic succession, and all that sort of thing, you will become an Episcopalian sooner or later. I never knew a case that turned out otherwise. It indicates a weak spot, as I told you; and weak spots always betray themselves."

"Harry is going to join the Episcopalian Church," said Alban, "and yet I have done every thing in my power to dissuade him from it. But Miss Ellsworth's bright eyes, and the charm of the beautiful Liturgy, are more than a match for my arguments. I have actually lost all my influence over Henry by the ground I have taken in reference to the subject."

"You hope to introduce Episcopacy and Liturgies

among ourselves? I have heard of such an idea. It is the first thought of a youth who begins to see, as he says, 'the importance of these things.' Well, try it, Alban. But take my word for it, you will only do yourself harm. You will pass for a silly visionary. Every body will laugh at you. Our own people, of course, will; for they don't want to be turned into Episcopalians; if they did, they would take the shorter way of joining the Episcopal Church. And Episcopalians will only say that you are grossly inconsistent, and that you ought to come into '*the Church*' at once."

"They would be quite right," said Alban. "It would be the height of absurdity to go about to reconstruct the Church on a supposed divine model, when, if the Church be a divine thing at all, it must exist in the world ready made to our hands. If I were satisfied with the Episcopal Church, I would join it; but I am not. The Church, it seems to me, is, at least, the faith that believes Christ and the love which embraces Him, made visible. The Episcopal Church neither believes nor loves as I do. Its articles outrage my faith, and its Liturgy disappoints my heart."

"Well, and heartily said! I declare, Atherton, you have no idea how you relieve my mind. To see

your fine understanding beclouded by this fog of Episcopacy, — a mere unmeaning, superstitious formalism — would have been too pitiable. But what do you mean then about the Sacrament? I hope you are not getting into the mystical line, and renouncing outward forms altogether. This has ensnared some choice intellects, refining too much for humanity. We need memorials. It is not philosophical, Atherton, to overlook the immense influence that the Lord's Supper has exercised over the feelings of Christians in all ages. It has revived their love for the Redeemer almost more than every thing else. Don't you feel, now, that this is true?"

"Certainly."

The Professor was nonplussed. He thought he had explored the whole ground. What point was left? He began to feel provoked with Atherton.

"Pray let me know what *is* your difficulty," he said with irritation. "My whole wish is to serve you, and it is hardly treating me well to let me go on beating about the bush in the dark."

"I have been in some confusion as to my duties, sir, from my being actually a member of the College Church. Obedience to my father, and love for my mother, keep me from openly avowing a change which has taken place in my faith. I had persuaded myself

that I might innocently join a company of Christians with whom I was providentially associated, in partaking of bread and wine in memory of Christ's death. But when it came to the point, I shrank from doing it, for whatever it is to them, to me it could be nothing but a sacrilegious substitution for the adorable sacrament of love in which I believe."

The Professor stared as if he thought him deranged.

"At one time, not long ago," continued Alban, with some excitement of manner, "I was forced by the manifest contradiction between our New England religion and the Bible, to retreat upon the Hebrew position. I found there an ancient revelation and a living witness in perfect harmony."

The Professor gave him a look of piercing scrutiny, but was silent.

"It was deeply painful to me to have these ideas. Christ was dear to me:—yes, He was dear to me through it all. I could never bear to hear Him spoken of with irreverence. Somehow, I had an idea that He was the real Messiah, but that neither His own nation, nor His actual followers had understood him. I grew more and more bewildered. I began to look for Him to reappear. I was desirous of going to Palestine, in the hope, mixed with many

a carnal aspiration, of seeing Him. My heart cried out for Christ."

Alban shed some quiet tears. The Professor now regarded him with a mixture of fear and pity.

"We will talk over these things another time, my dear Atherton. You are excited at present."

"No, no," exclaimed Alban. "Now I have begun, let me finish. I can do it in a word. I have found Christ where alone He really is on this earth. I have not as yet found Him, indeed, as I hope to find Him, but I know where to seek Him; and he who knows where to seek, has already found. It is not in Syria, sir, but it is in Jerusalem, in a city set on a hill, of which all men know at least so much as this, that He is said to be there. In faith, sir," continued Alban, recovering his usual quiet manner of a sudden, — "in faith, I am now, what you, perhaps, will consider worse and more foolish than an Episcopalian — namely, a Roman Catholic."

"Poor Atherton! I do believe his head is turned," thought the Professor. "Next he will say that he is a Mahometan. Or, if not crazy, he is dangerous. His influence is unbounded over certain minds. There are a dozen fellows in the Senior class alone, who would follow him any where he chose to lead. This must be looked to in time. A Roman Catholic! oh,

he is clearly not sane. I must talk this over with you another day, Atherton," he added aloud. "At present, I see, you are busy with Plato. Good morning. And Atherton,—I hope you will keep this matter to yourself. That's right. Hem!" concluded the Professor, as the door closed upon him. "I must communicate this forthwith to the President."

CHAPTER II.

ACCORDING to the interpretation of many Catholic expositors of the mystical Book of Revelations, it is a little more than three hundred years ago since the STAR fell from heaven upon the earth, to whom was given the key of the bottomless pit. This is agreeable to the rules of symbolic interpretation recently laid down by Mr. LORD, and now, we believe, generally received by his Protestant brethren, viz., that a "Star" signifies a Christian teacher, and a "Star falling from heaven," the apostacy of such a teacher. That the Star fell upon the earth, intimates (agreeably to the same system) that this teacher fell from the divine to the human sphere in his doctrine; and the key of the bottomless pit being given him, that he opened an abyss

to which there is really no bottom, by appealing to human reason as the interpreter of the Divine Word; from which arose a smoke which darkened the sun and the air, (the infinite heresies, and gross, light-obscuring prejudices of Protestantism,) and from the smoke came out locusts upon the earth, or the military and civil powers by which Protestantism was propagated, the Church plundered, and the people persecuted to make them fall from the faith.

These hateful and violent powers, however, could not hurt the truly faithful, but only those whom mortal sin, whether sensual vice or intellectual pride, or covetousness, rendered deserving of it, that is, the men who had not the sign of God in their foreheads, who readily fell away and perished. They were as horses prepared to battle, to show the rapidity of their conquests; they had crowns of gold, to show that the movement against the Church was conducted by princes, like the sovereigns of Saxony, Brandenburg, and England; their "faces were as men," to indicate their pretensions to human learning and better reason, criticism, philosophy, and so on, (Humanitarianism;) and "hair as the hair of women," to indicate the effeminacy of their doctrine, in rejecting celibacy, authorizing polygamy, dissolving the bonds of sacred marriage, rejecting the ascetic prin-

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ciple in Christianity, and denying the merit as well as the possibility of heroic virtue. Their teeth were as lions, to show their destructiveness, evinced in the ruin of those splendid institutions and monuments wherewith centuries of piety had enriched Europe. They had "breastplates as breastplates of iron," to indicate that they would be insensible to reason or pity, as in the cruel proscription of the Catholic religion and the bloody persecution of its professors and ministers; and "the noise of their wings was as the noise of chariots and many horses running to battle," to show their great conspicuity and importance, and apparent triumph, their skill in filling literature with their doings, and their semblance of being the great movement of the age and of time. The double period of five months during which they were to torment and hurt, is supposed to intimate a duration of three hundred years, which now happily is come to an end; the Church is already, we may say, emancipated every where from their power; they may threaten, but can no longer injure; their "scorpion sting" is lost. However all this may be, and we don't undertake, like Aunt Fanny, to determine positively the sense of so mysterious a prophecy, the application is extremely pat in every particular, even to the succession of sovereigns, (doubtless of various countries,) by whom these sym-

bolic locusts were to be led. "They had a king over them," that is, says Mr. LORD, "many kings reigning successively," the angel or representative of their principles; if, indeed, this does not rather refer to the sect-leaders, to whom they always appeal, and whose destroying names flourish in regal pomp at the head of their armies. But we leave so subtle a point to those who can understand a proverb, and the interpretation thereof.

We suppose that even at the date of our story the scorpion sting in the tail of Protestantism could no longer hurt. It was true the "teeth as lions" were shown about that time by the burning down of a convent in Massachusetts, and of a church or two in Philadelphia, by an anti-popish mob, but as neither of these proceedings made any converts to Protestantism, but rather the reverse, the sharpness of the bite was wanting. And our Alban, in a Puritan college, although there is an immense dust kicked up and an unearthly clamour made, is in no danger of life or limb. He will neither be hanged nor burned, nor even set in a pillory, nor whipped at the cart-tail, of all which he might once have stood in danger, even in New England; still less will he be embowelled, as priests used to be in Old England for saying mass, or pressed to death, as women used to be in the same

country for hearing it. Still he is a culprit, and must "suffer some."

The thing was whispered. It got about in the town before it did in the college, which shows that some who were in the secret had female friends. Then the case was mentioned in a social prayer-meeting in college, that the unfortunate young man in question might be "unitedly" prayed for! A hundred young men, by the way, in a college lecture-room at five in the morning, some on their legs, some kneeling on the floor, some resting their heads on the back of the bench before them, so as to conceal their faces entirely, while one of their number, standing with closed eyes and extended arms, or clasped hands, is pouring forth an extempore prayer,—measured, deliberate, long, rather in the manner of reasoning than supplication,—is an impressive scene. There was a faint stirring of the waters for a revival in college at that time, as there generally is in the spring term, and prayer-meetings were held every morning before chapel in the Rhetorical Chamber. Alban was prayed for without mentioning his name, but the absence of a "professor" hitherto so shining, and always conspicuous from his talents, could not escape notice. It was easy to put this and that together; the secret was soon nominal; and one morn-

ing, not long after prayers had been mysteriously requested in his behalf, a coarse but fervent youth — a Western man — ripped out the name in full in a long supplication, in which the speaker took occasion to enter into all the circumstances, for the benefit of such as might yet be ignorant.

His friends fell off at once. Even Henry Atherton, as we have intimated, had grown cold. His class no longer cheered him; the Brothers' Society listened to him in unsympathizing silence. The new President was applauded in turning his palmary argument in a debate, into ridicule, and the Society decided for the first time against the side he had supported. Society, in any of its spheres, is never so unjust as when it turns against a former idol. He is still great by the memory of her favour, and therefore she feels no pity. O'Connor, who was a plucky fellow, and would have stood by Alban, had left Yale and gone to St. Joseph's Seminary. The gentlemanly Charles Carroll was cold to the supposed convert.

It was felt by his religious friends that it would not do to trust wholly to prayer. Charitable charity-students, whom Alban had befriended or loved in the days of his fervent experimental religion, called to pay the debt by earnest warnings. Hardly a day passed without one such visit. Some came repeatedly.

Old ladies in the town sent for him to touch his feelings by reminding him of his grandfather and mother, of his departed aunts and living uncles, and missionary cousins, and a host of good people of his all but sacred name and blood, who, dead, would be ready to start up in their graves, or living, would almost break their hearts, to hear that he was fallen into such fearful errors.

Our young friend answered the old ladies that his *living* friends might err, and that the present opinions of such as were dead might be very different from what they supposed.

His pious classmates, his friends in the Theological Seminary, and the Divinity Professors, opened upon him a terrible battery of arguments. Alban smiled when they told him that Popery was pointed out in the New Testament as the Man of Sin, by the clear marks of forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats. It was as clear a case as Aunt Fanny's notion that the "Church at Philadelphia" meant the Quakers. Did that Church forbid to marry, he smilingly demanded, which declared matrimony to be a SACRAMENT? which interrupted its august sacrifice for one purpose alone—to bless the new-married pair, and invoke for them fruitfulness in the bed and peace at the board, chaste constancy

in love and length of mutual days? It was not forbidding or dishonouring marriage, he argued, to say that celibacy was more excellent; for St. Paul himself expressly said it, affirming that it was "*beautiful to remain a virgin.*" These were Christian ideas, he assured them, not Popish.

"But the Papal Church forbids *priests* to marry — a clear proof that matrimony is considered impure," said one obstinate reasoner. It was a theological student who was engaged to be married to a daughter of one of the Divinity Professors. He was ever harping on this string. He came every day to see Alban about it, and Alban at first declined to meet the objection. At length our hero's patience and modesty were alike exhausted.

"Do you pretend to talk to me in this way," he cried, with a deep flush, "when I have the Bible in my hands? Do I not know that God Himself enjoined a sacred abstinence, not on a few priests only, but on the whole nation of the Jews, for three days before He descended on Sinai? Do I not know that God laid a perpetual obligation of this sort upon all priests during the time of their service? Did God *Himself* in this signify that union to be impure which He had hallowed in Paradise? Yes, or no?"

"No."

"Then neither does the Church insinuate that marriage is other than a holy estate, although she requires a better choice of those who are to serve continually at her altars, daily handling mysteries of which those of the Old Law were but the shadows. It is painful to me to talk of these things," added Alban. "I am shocked at your notions of Christian sanctity, and of the power of grace."

It was pretty much in this style that the aggressive Protestantism of the College was met by him. One candid classmate said that Atherton had a "fatal familiarity with the Bible," and that Scripture, as he handled it, was a two-edged sword.

Mr. Soapstone, too, who did not confide so much in the Bible, interpreted, as he said, by private judgment, but who was strong in Patristics, could not suffer his interesting young friend to fall a prey to Romanism without stretching out an arm to save him. When Alban, however, heard that the Church of Rome had committed schism in separating from the Church of England, he laughed outright.

"As if the button should say to the coat — 'Why did *you* fall off?'"

But for the reply to this irreverent squib, we refer the reader to Mr. S.'s celebrated tract on "Local Catholicity."

At the first blush, we say, every body had deserted our young friend. But by degrees his old admirers gathered round him, heard his reasons, and, at least in part, espoused his cause. The standard of religious liberty was raised. Two parties were formed in college; — the Protestants, and “Atherton’s friends.” The dispute ran so high that one-half the Senior class would not speak to the other. Every man felt bound to take a side. Atherton — the quiet, philosophical, regular Atherton, the favourite of the tutors — was become a disturber of the peace of the University.

Alban’s enemies — for the rancour of religious prejudice made them such — were not content to assail his principles and decry his talents; they attacked his private character. They had, indeed, no handle for this except some incautious admissions of his own, dropped in pure frankness and humility, when defending the doctrine of penitence. ’T was said that Atherton had been guilty of card-playing, (not playing for money, observe, but simply for amusement, was a crime in those days,) drinking to intoxication, and other immoralities, in New York; that, in consequence, he had “lost his religion,” and was given up to this delusion — “to believe a lie.” Others said that he did not really believe in Popery any more than they did. But what excited a greater, because vague

horror, was that, a Catholic priest coming into town for a few days, Atherton was seen in his company, and (it was even rumoured) received a visit from him at his rooms. The popular idea of a Catholic priest, at that time, was of a fiend in human shape, who knew too much of his religion to believe it, but exercised a fearful tyranny over the minds of some poor ignorant people for the sake of gain; who abused the confidence of the confessional to corrupt innocent women, and committed the greatest crimes every day without compunction. Regarding young Atherton as the voluntary associate of such a monster, even grave, elderly folks turned away their heads, or stared in wonder, as they passed him in the streets, and shy maidens hurried by him with downcast eyes and pale cheeks, instinctively gathering their garments closer to their shrinking forms.

Alban would not have minded these things, if he had not feared a more tangible infliction in the shape of a college censure. Perhaps it might be suspension, or the loss of his oration, or even of his degree. He heard that there was talk of sending him away, or making him lose a year, and the privilege of graduating with his class. Besides the mortification, this would have been a serious injury to him at the outset of life. Indeed, any academical censure at that period

of his course must be a wound to the pride and feelings of his friends and family, and consequently a misfortune to him. Still he trusted that by circumspection in his conduct he should avoid it. He was more regular at chapel than almost any Senior, nor was there any change in that calm attention which he had always given to the chapter at prayers. During the long extempore prayer, he stood, as had always been his custom, with folded arms and eyes downcast. Some asserted, that his lips were always moving, as if he were praying by himself, and that he carried for this purpose a string of beads under his cloak; but this was a mere calumny. Alban had adopted few of the devotional practices so much esteemed by Catholics, inasmuch as he knew not of them. His prayers were mostly mental. In chapel, he used to meditate on the acts, and if his lips ever moved, it was unconsciously. This purely spiritual worship grew upon him the more, because he was entirely cut off from the service of the Church. Father Smith's place had not yet been supplied, and the priest who had left his own district to visit the flock at New Haven, only said mass on a few week-days, at an hour when Atherton could not attend without being absent from chapel.

Matters were in this state when a grave complication occurred. One day the post brought him a

note, in a feminine hand, without a signature, requesting him, in somewhat mysterious terms, to meet the writer, on the road to East Rock, during the afternoon study-hours. It concluded with the expression, that if Mr. Atherton was a sincere Catholic, he would not fail to come, as, according to his doctrine, the salvation of a soul was at stake. Alban was extremely perplexed. He did not like to take no notice of the communication, and it might be only a hoax, or any way, might get him into a scrape. However, on the very afternoon appointed, a visit from the Divinity Professor saved him from the necessity of deciding.

In the evening, came a little black girl with another note from his unknown correspondent. She reproached him for not meeting her at the time appointed.

"I must, if possible, see you this evening," pursued the note, "and shall wait on the Green for that purpose till my messenger returns. If you fail to come, (but surely you will not,) I shall lose that good opinion of you which I have hitherto preserved, in spite of all the nonsense that people talk."

Henry Atherton had gone to a Wednesday-evening lecture with Mary Ellsworth, (for it was Lent,) and Alban, after a single question to the sooty little messenger, threw on his cloak, screwed down the study

lamp, and followed her. The paschal moon (then a few days old) shed a pale illumination over the white Doric pile of the State House, and it was thither that the black girl directed her way. When Atherton arrived at the foot of the lofty steps, he perceived a female figure between the columns. She drew behind a column as he ascended, but when he stood by her in the portico, addressed him in a firm, pleasant voice, quite free from nervous trepidation.

"Mr. Atherton, I am Miss Hartshorn," said she.

"I remember you, Miss Hartshorn."

"Mr. Atherton," said Miss Hartshorn, "I won't detain you by apologies for the step I have taken, since I owe none to you. There is a theological student boarding at our house whom you know."

"Walker. He is licensed and gone somewhere to preach as a candidate, — is he not?"

"He went away, and came back sick with inflammation of the lungs. He has been lying at our house a fortnight. Pa thinks he will not live through it, and Mr. Walker himself expects to die. He wants to see you, Mr. Atherton, but they won't let him. Mr. Walker has prevailed on me to tell you about it. I suppose it is wrong, but I am not a Christian, and I mean to take my chance of getting him a little peace of mind while he lives, at any rate. He has been out

of his head, and they have allowed no one to see him but Professor ——, and one or two of Mr. Walker's most particular friends."

"Is he still out of his head?"

"Pa says not."

"Dr. Hartshorn has been his physician, I suppose."

"Pa and Dr. Reynolds both. Dr. Reynolds was for letting Mr. Walker see you, but pa and the ministers would not consent to it. Mr. Walker says he must die a Catholic, and wants you to get a priest for him, and all sorts of things. I think he is more distracted by what he has on his mind, than delirious from the fever; and always has been."

"Walker used to call on me frequently to dispute. I thought him very far from such a change."

"He was always talking against you, Mr. Atherton—for ever! You see it was because he was disturbed by what you said. They say that his mind is weakened by disease, (for he was a man of strong mind, Mr. Atherton,) and perhaps it is, but the horror he has of dying is awful. I promised him that I would see you myself, and I did not know any better way than this. He gritted his teeth like a madman when I told him to-night that I had not succeeded in obtaining an interview with you. 'In twenty-four hours,' said he, 'I shall be one of the damned. Have you no pity on

me, Miss Hartshorn?'—You see that I could not refuse him, but how you will manage to see him, Mr. Atherton, I cannot tell?"

Walker was the same theological student whose mind had been so exercised in regard to the celibacy of priests. Alban was surprised that he had not even heard of his illness. Miss Hartshorn observed that "they kept very still about it." She did not believe Mr. Atherton would be suffered to have an interview with the dying man; and as for a priest, her father, who was a deacon in the Congregational Church, and the two ministers who daily attended at Mr. Walker's bedside, would as soon think of admitting "the old gentleman himself;" by which Miss Hartshorn meant to signify a personage whom many people dislike to name.

"Shall you see Mr. Walker to-night so as to give him a message?" asked Alban, after a little thought.

"Oh, yes; I see him every night. His room is next to mine. I used to have to keep it locked pretty strictly when Mr. Walker was well, poor fellow! But I don't mind now, except on account of his watchers. They are theologues too. Very well-behaved young men. I have nothing to say against them. But I can go in when I like, to speak to Mr. Walker and offer him his drink."

"Well, tell him that you have seen me, and that I am going to send for a priest. I shall send an express this very night. Can you let me know, Miss Hartshorn, if any change occurs?"

"Hetty here," pointing to the little black girl, "shall bring you word. I will run that risk. She is safe, but if any body should see her going to your room — why she lives with us, you understand."

"Exactly. Let her come in the evening, if possible. I shall go openly to your father's and ask to see Mr. Walker. Good night, Miss Hartshorn. May God reward you for this."

"I might have been afraid if it had been any one else," said Miss Hartshorn, descending the white steps with him, "but Mr. Walker told me that I might rely on Mr. Atherton's treating me with as much respect alone as before a hundred witnesses. I am not a bad girl, and that you won't think me one, Mr. Atherton, although I don't pretend to be a Christian."

Miss Hartshorn meant that she had never experienced a change of heart, not that she was either a Mahometan, a Jew, or an infidel.

"I would trust you further, Miss Hartshorn," said Alban, "than some bright professors I know."

CHAPTER III.

IF the affair at which our story is arrived concerned such a thing as that Mr. De Groot's tenants were going to ruin him by refusing his rents; if the hero's life were in danger from an African despot or Spanish brigand; if the matter were the abduction of a lovely heiress, or the fall of a princely house, we might hope to interest our readers. Yet a greater thing was at stake than the perpetuation of the Howards, or the rights of the Bourbons, or the liberty of the French, or the credit of the Rothschilds, or the nationality of Poland. The burning of the Industrial Exhibition, or the destruction of the Vatican Gallery with all its masterpieces—the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Stanze of Raphael, the ceiling of the Sistine; or the oblivion

of a science—say chemistry or astronomy; or any other like or worse misfortune that the civilized world would feel as a universal calamity, or all together, could not make an unit wherefrom, by infinite multiples, one could express that catastrophe which now hung in the delicate balance of Providence, and depended, under the Supreme, upon the clearness of our hero's judgment, and on the energy of his will.

A week had passed, and the paschal moon was past the full. The white State House on the green—modelled from the Temple of Theseus—shone like an earthly Luna, reflecting the beams of the just risen satellite. A youth, involved in a cloak, paced to and fro under the portico. By and by a little girl appeared at the foot of the vast white steps, and began to ascend them. When she got to the top, she gave a billet to the young man in the cloak. While he read it she turned her face to the moon, and the face was black almost as the hood that surrounded it. When the young man had read the billet, he also looked up to the sky.

"Tell your mistress," he said at last—

"Miss 'Liza?" demanded the little negress.

"Miss Eliza—that I will come at eleven to-night."

The child of Afric sped her way home. Dr. Harts-

horn's house stood in a garden; it was an old double house, with mighty elms before it, for Dr. Hartshorn was an old and respected inhabitant, an established physician, although, as his family consisted of but Mrs. Hartshorn and their daughter Eliza, he was willing to take a theological student as a boarder: for Dr. Hartshorn had been a deacon of the Congregationalist Church for thirty years, and was a very shining Christian, which your deacon sometimes is not. Little Hetty, (Dr. Hartshorn kept one female "help," a stout lad to do the chores, and Hetty,)—little Hetty went round to the kitchen door and admitted herself silently into the house. Ike—the lad that did the chores—was carrying in an armful of hickory from the well-piled wood-house to replenish the "sittin'-room" fire, for "them ministers" were there, as he gruffly informed the little negress. Hannah—the female help—was ironing, and made Hetty shut the outside door after Ike.

The house was planned in this wise. The two parlours, with the hall between them, in front; the bedroom of the heads of the family, and the kitchen in the rear, constituted the ground floor. The doctor's office was a sort of offset or wing, having a direct exterior door, as well as separate front gate, so that professional calls needed not to disturb the house.

Above stairs there was Walker's room, and the best chamber opposite; back of which, respectively, were Miss Hartshorn's room and the chamber of the female servants, Hannah and Hetty; for although Hannah was white, she condescended to share her sleeping apartment with such a "little nigger" as Hetty. But Hetty, of course, had a separate cot. Hannah would as soon have shared her bed with Ike as with the neatest little coloured person of her own sex. Between these was a little room occupied alternately during the night by the watchers, who thus were enabled to relieve one another — a matter of some moment, as it was considered desirable not to summon a greater number of persons to Walker's bedside than absolute necessity required. A sort of low piazza (painted red) ran along the back of the house; and at the corner, where the office wing projected from the main building, it was easy for an active man to climb, by the aid of the lightning-rod, so as to get upon the "shed," or roof of the piazza; whence again, it was easy, by the windows, (at least if one had a friend within,) to enter either Hannah's room, or the little chamber which the watchers occupied; or, finally, Miss Hartshorn's apartment.

The ministers were assembled in the sitting-room, and conversed on the perplexing affair of their sick

brother. There was a difference of opinion between them, in regard to the course proper to be pursued.

"For my part," said a dark, diffident-looking, but meditative man, who spoke in a rich voice, and very quietly, "I am disposed to concede to Brother Walker in the matter of his wish to see young Atherton. I do not see that principle is involved in denying such a request, nor do I apprehend the evil consequences from granting it, which the rest of the brethren seem to forebode."

"I think, on the contrary," said a massive, practical-looking man, somewhat advanced in life, "that there is jealousy enough, and bitter theological hatred enough, entertained in reference to the New Haven Seminary, without letting it go abroad that one of our licentiates has died a Papist, and that we have made ourselves, at least, accessaries after the fact. It will be laid to the door of the New Haven divinity, depend upon it, Brother F."

"I think the admission of Atherton is inconsistent with our position and his," said a very calm, still-voiced personage, who seemed to be a dignitary of no slight mark, as both the others directed their observations rather to him. "The only middle course that occurs to me, is what I have already suggested—for I only suggest—namely, that we request one of the

Episcopal clergymen in New Haven to visit Mr. Walker. Their Church uses a form of absolution, and it is possible that they may thereby quiet the conscience of this unhappy young man."

"I would prefer to call in a Roman Catholic priest at once," said a young clergyman who had not spoken before. "If there is any thing in a human absolution that can benefit the soul in the presence of God"—he spoke in a hoarse and hollow voice—"let us have it from an authentic source. None of this double-shuffle in religion—this miserable trumpery of the form, without even the profession of the power, which real Popery claims. Away with it, I say!"

This speaker was thin, narrow-shouldered, long-necked, (which his white neckcloth exaggerated,) and sallow in complexion. His forehead was high and broad, and his dark, saturnine eye was piercing. Near him sat, in the corner of the sofa, a minister (evidently such) of about the same apparent age, (say thirty-one or two,) but a strong contrast in other respects—light-haired, blue-eyed, softly florid, and graceful in figure. He was now appealed to by the mild dignitary, and spoke with great gentleness—almost too great for a man, and in a voice almost femininely sweet.

"As a stranger, I feel diffident in expressing, and indeed in forming, an opinion. Are the brethren satis-

fied, may I ask, that this dying brother is now in the possession of his faculties?"

"Perfectly," said his dark-eyed neighbour, in his hollowest tone.

"It is, therefore, a case of wilful departure from God, and turning to a refuge of lies—at least so far as human eyes can judge; for it may be—we should trust so—but a permitted temptation of Satan, meant to cloud, for a time, our brother's evidence, but from which he may yet emerge triumphant. In either point of view ought we not to wait on the Lord for him in prayer, and leave the rest, with submission, to God?"

This advice was like oil on the waters. The colloquy was turned into a prayer-meeting. One after another, (all kneeling,) at the request of the most forward, poured out a long and earnest supplication in behalf of the dying Walker. The deep monotone of their voices, changing in pitch from time to time, rolled on for nearly an hour. Eliza Hartshorn, who was working in the parlour opposite and keeping her mother company, thought they would never get through. In fact, the perplexity of the ministers was great and real. Humanity pleaded strongly with some of them in the dying man's behalf, but theological prejudice, the fear of stultifying themselves, and

awe of the opinion of their world, restrained the impulse.

At ten o'clock Mrs. Hartshorn laid aside her knitting, read her chapter, and prepared to retire. She recommended to her daughter to follow her example, but Miss Hartshorn said that she should certainly sit up till the ministers were gone. Finally, Dr. Hartshorn and Dr. Reynolds came in from the office, visited the patient, and, after a short consultation on the stairs, joined the clerical conclave.

"Well, doctor?"

"Mr. Walker, gentlemen, draws near his end."

"Will he last out the night, doctor?"

"He *may* do so."

"But you do not expect it."

"It is our *opinion* that Mr. Walker will not live two hours."

"Is he aware of the close proximity of death?"

"We have thought it best that one of you gentlemen should communicate it to him. It is the duty of the priest rather than of the physician," said Dr. Reynolds.

After some consultation the dark-eyed, hollow-voiced —, and the mild Professor F—, who had been Walker's immediate pastor before the latter became a licentiate, were deputed to this office. The

— took leave, pleading the hour and his age. Dr. Reynolds also went off with the air of a man who felt himself no longer needed.

Walker was not greatly changed, except in colour and expression. A sort of green pallor overspread his features as he sat, supported by numerous pillows, in a position almost erect, on account of his impeded respiration. Only one of his watchers was in the room; the other had already retired, and was asleep in the little bedroom at the back end of the chamber entry. A study-lamp, with a shade, stood on the table, and the watcher sat by it, in a rocking-chair. On the table were books and vials, glasses for medicine, and a decanter of wine. It had been necessary for some time to support the patient's strength by stimulants.

"How do you do, Mr. Wiley?" said the Professor, addressing the watcher in his softest voice.

"How do you do, brother Wiley?" said the other minister in a deep tone.

Mr. Wiley placed chairs for them by the bedside. Professor F—— took Walker's hand kindly and felt his pulse. It was imperceptible, as the Professor gently intimated.

"What does that imply?" said Walker. "Death?"

"We cannot hope that you will continue long with

us, Walker, unless God should choose to make a change."

"What do the doctors say? How long have I to live? Tell me the truth," said the dying man, "as you hope for God's mercy."

"We have no desire to conceal the truth from you, brother Walker," said the other minister, more gently than he was wont. "The doctors say that you are sinking. They fear that you will not live many hours."

"How many?" asked Walker, gasping slightly.

"Perhaps not two hours more," said the minister firmly. "You are quite pulseless, and there is effusion in the chest, which increases. These are fatal symptoms, brother Walker. We tell you in kindness, that you may use the time you have left, to make your peace with God, if so be that you have not made it already."

"For the love of God," said Walker, beginning to breathe hard and quick, "send for Alban Atherton. I must see a priest before I die. For God's sake, Professor F., send for a priest to absolve me before I die. I shall go to hell. Oh, my God! I would go to purgatory willingly for a million of years—but everlasting perdition! These men have no mercy. God forgive you."

He seemed strangling; but Mr. Wiley calmly brought a draught from the table; the patient coughed and raised a quantity of frothy and sanguineous mucus; then drank, and became quiet, though his eyes glared wildly from one to the other of his persecutors.

"There is no priest to be had, brother Walker," continued the same minister; for Professor F., pushing back his chair, seemed to abandon the case as beyond human reach: "and besides, the hope you place in that source is but a refuge of lies—a reliance on which is the true cause that threatens your perdition. Who can forgive sins but God only? Go directly to Him. Not that it would be improper to unburden your mind to one of us, if you have any load of special guilt upon it. 'Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.' Not a word there about a priest."

"We have been over this ground so often with brother Walker, that I think it is useless to recur to it now," interposed Professor F.

"I wished once more to direct brother Walker's mind away from priests and human absolutions, to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," said the hollow-voiced minister solemnly. "'His blood cleanseth from all sin.'"

"How am I to apply His blood to my soul?"

"By faith," responded the minister, "appropriating him as your Saviour, and renouncing all dependence on your own righteousness."

"Will you pray," said Walker, addressing the Professor, "and then leave me? I wish to be alone."

The ministers and Mr. Wiley knelt, and Professor F. began to pray. He was not very fluent, but commenced, apparently from habit, by addressing Almighty God, "Who by Thy apostle hast said, 'If any be sick among you, let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him'—"

"'Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord,'—why don't you go on with the text?" interrupted Walker.

This disconcerted Professor F., who soon brought the prayer to a conclusion, and his hollow-voiced ministerial brother sighed deeply as they rose from their knees.

People moved through the passages, and on the stairs. Some were females, from their lighter tread and rustling garments. By and by the house became quiet. Mr. Wiley was to call the family if any change occurred, and Hannah, before going to bed, stopped

at the door to let him know that there was hot water in case it were needed. Dr. Hartshorn came in again before retiring. As he quitted the sick-room he tried the door communicating with his daughter's to ascertain if it was locked on the other side, which it *was*. But Miss Hartshorn was still in the parlour, and her father looked in upon her.

"Come, Eliza, it is time you were in bed. It is already considerably past eleven."

"I cannot bear to go to bed, pa, when any person is dying in the house."

"Nonsense, child. I desire that you will go up stairs, at all events, immediately. I sha'n't retire as long as any one is stirring below. Come."

So Miss Hartshorn took her candle and slowly went up the stairs. Her father tried the outer doors, and withdrew the key from the lock. He did not go into his chamber till his daughter's figure was no longer visible from below, and even then he left the door ajar, so that no one could descend the stairs without his knowing it.

Miss Hartshorn did not repair directly to her room; she went to the sick-room and tapped. Mr. Wiley came to the door. She asked a question, and Mr. Wiley came out—nay, he gently closed the door all but a crevice—while he answered her.

They whispered awhile, Miss Hartshorn, who was an engaging girl of five-and-twenty, looking very modest, but much interested.

"Don't stand there in the entry with your candle, Eliza," said her father's voice from below.

"No, sir," cried Miss Hartshorn, and with a saucy air, by signs, invited Mr. Wiley into the opposite or spare chamber, to finish what he had to say. Without much hesitation the young man complied; Miss Hartshorn (was not her courage fine?) shut the door, and the candle no longer shining in the entry, her father returned to his room.

Meanwhile, Alban, who had not familiarized his mind for nothing to scaling balconies, had come from some strange hiding-place, and was kneeling by Walker's bedside.

"I am dying, Atherton. I want a priest. Confession—absolution! I am a great sinner."

"I expected a priest to-night, but he has not arrived. To-morrow he will certainly be here."

"To-morrow! I have not two hours to live," said Walker feebly, and struggling for breath. Weak as he was, he suppressed the inclination to cough, but the blood flowed from his lips. "No hope for me!"

"Say not so, my dear Walker; God does not require impossibilities. An act of perfect contrition,

with the desire of the sacrament which you have, is sufficient to blot out your sins in a moment. I have never confessed. I am preparing to do so when Father O'Ryan comes. But if I were to die to-night, I trust I should be saved. The doctrine of the Church is, that perfect contrition—which is genuine sorrow for sin from the love of God, whom sin offends—suffices without the sacrament, if we desire the sacrament and purpose to receive it when we have opportunity, as you and I both do."

"But who can give me perfect contrition? Alas! my sorrow for sin proceeds almost wholly from fear of hell. I think of naught else, day and night, but those eternal flames. I have sinned so grievously. Let me whisper in your ear."

Alban turned pale as he listened to Walker's whispers.

"There is no hope for me! you feel it?"

"You have sinned grievously —"

"Oh, that is only one—the greatest—"

"But the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. It matters not how guilty we are; one drop of that precious blood is sufficient to make us whiter than snow."

"But how is it to be applied to my soul?" The same question which he had put to the ministers.

"The sacraments apply the blood of Christ to the soul, if they are received with suitable dispositions," replied Alban; "but there is no minister of the sacraments here, unless of baptism. Are you sure that you have been baptized?"

Walker had been baptized in infancy by his father, who was a Congregationalist minister of the old school, and was accustomed to use trine affusion with great particularity. Walker had seen his father baptize often.

"There cannot be a doubt that you have been baptized," Alban said. "Perhaps I must teach you a little. Life is the direct gift of God, Walker, yet it comes to us by the ministry of our parents, by the sacrament, if one may say so, of natural generation. It is God who sustains us, who heals us; but it is by the natural sacraments of food and medicine. Nor can it be otherwise in the spiritual world. There is a ministry and a sacrament of spiritual birth, healing, sustenance. God seems to do nothing without a form, which, united to a certain appointed matter, conveys to us his manifold benefits. You have not feared, my dear Walker, to profane the innocence and the life of grace which God gave you in baptism, and now you need another sacrament of Divine institution to heal your wounded soul, to renew within

you the justice which you have lost. Christ's blood has purchased for you the right to such a renewal — to such a medicine. Christ's word has provided it for you in the sacrament of penance; but a minister to whom He has said, 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven,' is wanting to apply it."

"Ah, you plunge me in despair," said Walker, whose eyes were fixed on the youth's lips.

"*Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,*" answered Alban, solemnly and tenderly. "The compassion of our Creator and Redeemer is infinite. You must have perfect contrition, certainly, and perfect contrition is *very difficult* to elicit; it is impossible without special grace, as the Church teaches. I know of but one certain way to obtain it — to interest the Saints in our behalf. God will grant to their prayers what He justly withholds from ours. St. James assures us of it. The sacred heart of Jesus, and that of His blessed Mother, are the refuge of sinners. Fly to them, dear Walker, in these straits. No one, however stained with sin, was ever lost who had recourse, with perfect confidence, to Jesus and Mary. All the Saints say that. For in every exigency God devises means to bring His banished back. Weak, alone, cut off from the ministrations of the visible Church, your faith, Walker, places

you in the fellowship of the invisible and triumphant Church. From their bright thrones they watch you, expecting that cry which claims their aid. It is not in vain for us that they *reign* with Christ — believe it firmly.”

Walker’s eyes filled with tears. He was prepared to believe all. A great scene opened upon him with the clearness of death-bed vision — a great and holy society, partly visible, partly unseen, but travelling in charity for him; the Lamb of God, the Fount of all that love, its bond the Divine Humanity. If he had been left without the ordinary means which God, as Alban cited from Holy Writ, “devises to bring His banished back,” it was only that that charity might reveal itself by overflowing its appointed channels, which is nothing but charity when it restrains itself within them.

Mr. Wiley, having whispered as long as he thought decency permitted with Miss Hartshorn, in the spare chamber, returned into the passage; but behold the sick-room door was shut. Mr. Wiley tried the handle in silence, but the key had been turned on the inside.

“Good gracious, Miss Hartshorn!”

“Really! what can have happened?”

“May I pass through your room, Miss Hartshorn?”

"Oh, sir, through my room, indeed!"

"Your door is locked, too, Miss Hartshorn"—after trying it, in spite of her reclamations.—"What is to be done, indeed!" The cold sweat stood on Mr. Wiley's forehead. "Can he have got up?"—listening at the door. "Some one is talking to him," he said, with great agitation.

Miss Hartshorn's quick ear caught her father stirring. She blew out the light with great presence of mind, and whispered her companion to be still. In fine, the doctor came groping up stairs. Miss Hartshorn drew Mr. Wiley, confounded at the dilemma, into the spare room again. The bright moon shone in at the window of the entry, but the closed shutters excluded it from the spare room. The doctor came to the door of the sick-chamber and listened; he heard a low voice as in prayer. The rigid countenance of the Congregational deacon, supposing that he heard Mr. Wiley himself, smoothed in the moonlight into an expression of contented piety. With noiseless steps he returned to his own sanctum below.

With slow, agonizingly-muffled steps, poor Wiley again approached the fatal door. Miss Hartshorn, too, returned softly to the moonlit entry, keeping at a modest distance from her companion, who was, however, too much distressed to attend to her in the least.

No sentinel seeing the enemy's columns penetrate unobserved into the camp, could have been more sensible of the fault he had committed in deserting for a moment his post.

They could both faintly hear the Litany of the departing.*

"Is it a Catholic priest who is with him?" whispered Mr. Wiley, in a tone of awe.

"I don't know. Listen."

But all was a low, confused murmur of question and faint reply, till the same clear, soft voice was heard reciting, deliberately, the Acts of Faith and Hope, and of Divine Love, and the Act of Contrition; and something that might be supposed to be an *Amen* followed each. Miss Hartshorn knelt all the while at the door, and was weeping. Twice again the low accents repeated the Act of Contrition, which, if indeed it be assented to with all the heart, this sinner's salvation is secure.

"O holy and compassionate Virgin, Mother of Mercy and Refuge of sinners, suffer not this soul to perish for lack of thy all-powerful intercession, which in its last hour turns to thee the eye of hope. By the sword of suffering that pierced thy heart beneath the

* For this touching litany see the Golden Manual.

cross, be his advocate with thy Almighty Son, his Redeemer.

"O Jesus, who hast shed every drop of thy blood for him, melt his heart by one glance of thine infinite charity; remember him, Lord, in Thy kingdom; say to him as Thou didst to the thief who confessed to thee on the cross, 'This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' From all eternity Thou hast foreseen this hour. Behold, he is the child of time, and he has abused Thy gifts, but his sole hope, O Saviour of men, is in Thy mercy. Shed abroad in his heart a ray of that perfect charity which effaces in a moment the multitude of sins, for this gift also is thine; or else, O Lord, all-powerful, preserve him yet a little while for the sacrament of Thy reconciliation, which he so fervently desires."

These prayers were interrupted by Walker's coughing. The fit was severe, and was succeeded by panting moans as of one struggling for breath. Wiley could not refrain any longer from tapping on the door, and Alban came presently and opened it. Wiley went in with a cowed and guilty look. Walker was now suffering fearfully.

"Air! air! air!" he articulated; his countenance was of a darker lividity, and his lips bubbled with bloody foam, which Wiley wiped away with a hand-

kerchief. A draught which the latter offered he put away with his hand. His strength was so great that he raised himself entirely from the pillows, and sat unsupported save by Wiley's arm.

"Give me — air!"

Wiley motioned to Miss Hartshorn, who stood within the threshold. She understood him and ran down for her father. In a moment Dr. Hartshorn came up, with his dressing-robe thrown round him. After a glance at the bed, not even noticing Alban, he took a vial from the table and administered to the sick man a spoonful of liquid. A smell of ether was diffused through the apartment. Walker ceased to cry for air, and fell back, slightly panting, on the pillow. His eyes sought Atherton, who had knelt again by the bedside. Having never seen death, Alban was not alarmed.

"Do you believe in God," he said in a low voice, "and in all that He has revealed to His Church; the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, the Incarnation of His Son Jesus Christ of the Ever-virgin, His death for our sins, His resurrection for our justification, the perpetuation of His sacrifice and the presence of His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, the Remission of Sins by the power of the Keys which

He has left to His Church, and in general all that is believed and taught as of faith by the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, out of which there is no possibility of salvation?"

"I believe all," said Walker, with a faint eagerness.

"You hope in the infinite goodness of God, and in His gracious promises to you, though a sinner, for salvation through the blood of Christ, that is, the infinite merits of his sacred passion?"

"It is all my hope."

"It grieves you to the heart to have ever offended by thought, word, or deed, this God and Saviour?"

"To the heart."

"You desire to be reconciled to the Church by penance and absolution, were it possible?" continued Alban, in a trembling voice.

"God knows that I desire it—I ask not to live one moment longer than may suffice for that."

"Yet once more," pursued Alban, hurriedly; "you are willing, however, to die whenever it pleases God, and you accept your death in the spirit of penance, humbly offering it to God in union with the death of His beloved Son?"

Walker raised his eyes to heaven, but answered not with his lips. He seemed so collected and so

calm, that no one but the physician could believe that the end was so near. Dr. Hartshorn had stared at Alban wildly at first, and then fixed his gaze upon the sick. Mrs. Hartshorn had come up from the room in the garb of haste, and stood with her daughter at the bed's foot. Little Hetty had also somehow glided in, and stood with her black arms crossed on her breast, in her coarse chemise and petticoat.

Alban began to murmur prayers, to invoke the sweet names of Jesus and Mary. He took a crucifix from his bosom and offered it to Walker's lips.

"Behold with faith Him whom your sins have pierced, but who has washed them out in His heart's blood."

The dying man looked at the image of Him who was "lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness," with an expression of unutterable tenderness and compunction. His eyes wandered round as if he saw something in the room. He made an attempt to speak, but could only articulate faintly the words, "Jesus! Mary!"

There was a slam of the outer gate, followed quickly by a firm, loud knock at the street door. Little Hetty disappeared at a sign from her mistress, for Dr. Hartshorn was wholly absorbed. The eyes

of Walker were glazed; his jaw had fallen; he lay motionless. Mrs. Hartshorn was about to draw away the pillows from under the corpse, but her husband prevented her. Little Hetty came running in again, and whispered to Miss Eliza, who in turn whispered Atherton. The latter started up and went out. He returned in a minute, bringing in a gray-haired man in a long overcoat, and wrapped up as from night travel. The stranger approached the bedside, (even Dr. Hartshorn giving way before his air of quiet authority,) and uttered without delay some words in a voice almost inaudible, making a rapid sign in the air with one hand. The dying drew one soft breath, that just raised the linen over the breast. All waited in silence for another, but it came not, and at length it became manifest that all was over.

CHAPTER IV.

WALKER'S funeral, agreeably to the custom of the country, took place on the second day after his decease. His father and only sister had arrived but the day before; they had been sent for at an early period of his danger, but their journey was from far, and by winter roads. They were plunged in the deepest grief, for he was their hope and stay, and the trying circumstances of his last illness, considered in a religious point of view, could not be kept from their knowledge. The father, a respectable Congregationalist minister in Western New York, was profoundly humiliated by his son's death-bed apostacy: the daughter (now a sole surviving child) seemed stunned. A grave and stern sympathy pervaded New Haven;

Alban Atherton's name was hardly mentioned without some indignant sentence which on other lips would have been an execration; the Episcopalians alone secretly exulted in the blow inflicted on the pride and bigotry of the "standing order."

In the midst of this excitement, the young man preserved, like a recruit in his first battle, a calm exterior over a wildly beating heart. Early in the morning, (it was Good Friday, but the college routine was not interrupted for that,) he visited the house where the dead lay. He was shown by little Hetty into the best parlour, where a white-haired but hale-looking man, clerically attired, and a pale girl in black, already were. Mr. Walker, senior, was placid in mien, with that stern compression of the thin lips, so common in New England. He spoke not, but his looks said to the student, "What do you want with me?"

"My errand," said the young man, after a brief expression of sympathy with the affliction of those whom he addressed, "regards the performance of the last rites of religion at our friend's burial."

"The Reverend Doctor—— is to conduct them," said the senior Walker quickly.

"At the house, pa," said Miss Walker. "The Reverend Mr. —— is to officiate at the grave."

"I have no wish," said the young man, "to propose any thing that can conflict with these arrangements, which have been adopted in accordance with the feelings of survivors. The sole request which I would prefer in the name of the Catholic priest now here, is that on the way from the house to the grave the remains of your son, sir, may be taken to the Catholic chapel. The object, I need scarcely say, is to pay them those rites of respect which are due to one who died in our holy faith."

Mr. Walker started as if stung. Miss Walker stared at the speaker, as if she for the first time understood who he was, and was petrified at the presumption of his request — indeed, at the audacity of his coming. The father only answered quietly, but definitively,

"My son, I hope, died a Christian. I want no mummeries over his body."

"Let me claim your intercession, Miss Walker," said Alban.

"You cannot have it, sir," answered Miss Walker. "Why do you come here to add to our affliction by such proposals?" Her frame, which was slight, trembled with passion.

Alban rose.

"I have a message to deliver to you, Miss Walker,

which your brother, a little before he died, requested me to impart to you alone."

The young lady's pale face changed to crimson. Her father, gazing sternly out of the window, evidently listened not. In a minute the daughter rose, pale again, paler than before, and beckoned Alban to follow her. She preceded him up stairs to the room which had been her brother's. The door was locked, but the key was outside, and she turned it. The room was cold, but cheerful with the sun. The bedstead had been stripped of its furniture; the books, toilet, and table were arranged with the formal precision of a vacant chamber; but supported on three chairs was the open coffin with its stiff and white tenant. There were no flowers, as in the half-heathen Germany; no candles burning, as in Catholic lands; the dead lay coldly, but not unimpressively, alone."

"Here," said Miss Walker, seeming to lean on her brother's coffin for support, "we shall not be interrupted, but pray, sir, be brief."

Miss Walker had a high, prominent forehead, and large, dark, piercing eyes, full of melancholy. Her figure, in deep mourning, was remarkable only for its extreme fragility. Her attitudes and movements were somewhat rigid and ungraceful. She bent on Alban

those mournful eyes with an expression of fear, expectation, and distressful curiosity, mingled with something of womanly embarrassment, perhaps of maiden shame.

"Your brother fell into a grievous sin, not unknown to you," said Alban, "and he crowned the sin, as you also know, by a great injustice, and added a falsehood, which came little short of perjury, to shield himself from the consequences; finally, when driven to desperation, procured the commission of what even human laws punish as a crime, and which certainly is a great one in the sight of God. A great part of this is irreparable; but the person whom he has injured is known to you; it may be in your power to save her from further degradation and eternal ruin. He implores you to do it, even if his reputation should be thereby endangered. Do not be so overwhelmed—Miss Walker. God has pardoned your brother, we trust, and that is the important thing. Perhaps but for this fall he had not been saved. It is only a divine restraint upon us that prevents any of us from rushing into wickedness."

"I never knew his sin till it was too late to do more than conceal it as best I could."

"If concealment had not been unjust to another," said Alban.

"She deserved her fate," said the sister of Walker, looking up. "Not that I excuse my brother; but he was a man. A woman who forgets what is due to her sex, Mr. Atherton, must and ought to bear the penalty."

"Would *he* say so now, who has met, face to face, the justice of God?" said Alban, glancing down at those features locked in the tranquillity which knows no earthly comparison.

Miss Walker bowed herself over the calm, white face, from which Alban had lifted the light fall of muslin that covered it, and burst into sobs. Their violence racked her delicate frame. Some low words escaped her, in which nothing but "Brother" was distinguishable.

"And now I may say," continued Alban, "that we are not anxious to claim your brother as a convert for the sake of any credit that would hence redound to our religion. He fled to the Church as an ark of safety from the wrath of God. The Divine mercy inspired him with such dispositions, so far as we can judge, that the priest, whose word and sign in the last unconscious moments of existence swept away the airy barrier which yet separated him from the visible communion of God's Elect, entertains no doubt of his salvation, and is ready to attest the fact of his

reception into the Church by granting his mortal remains the last honours of the flesh which is to rise in Christ's image. For the repose of his soul, masses shall be offered. Whatever measure of just retribution his spirit suffers, the merits of the Divine sacrifice are applicable to expiate and relieve. Body and soul he belongs to Christ—not to Satan. That is what we wish to say, Miss Walker, — what we *dare* to say, — let the cruel, harsh-judging, unforgiving world talk of him as it will."

Now the sister's tears fell fast, but in silence. Although the quick transitions and delicate links of reasoning, than which adamant were more easily shivered, baffled a female attention in most that Alban would say on such subjects, the main drift was intelligible to a woman through her heart. A certain apprehension of punishment is inseparable from the knowledge of guilt in ourselves or those near to us. Hence Alban had touched the right string when he pointed out to Miss Walker that the Church extended over her brother in death, the arm of courageous love and the ægis of the name of Christ. She was softened enough to reason with the young student, whom at first she had regarded but with indignation and horror.

"I cannot imagine," said she, gently replacing the

muslin over the face of the dead, "how an absolution which seems to have been pronounced when my brother was unconscious, and actually breathing his last, should affect his state. You attach a value to forms, Mr. Atherton, which appears very strange."

"Because behind the veil of the form we see something that you do not — Jesus Christ 'gliding into the chamber and saying to the departing, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' But I must not tarry longer." The young man bowed for a moment over the dead, and turned away. "It is not good for you to remain here long," he said, allowing her to pass out before him. When they reached the bottom of the stairs, he extended his hand without alluding to the business which had occasioned his visit.

"I will get pa to consent to your proposal about —" said she, avoiding the conclusion of the sentence. "And in regard to the other matter — it rests between us, I hope, Mr. Atherton? We may never meet again, but you may be assured that my brother's dying request is something that I shall consider sacred."

The funeral was in the afternoon. A crowd of students and citizens of New Haven, with many ladies, filled every room within the house. Without were collected a great number of Irish servants and labourers, mingled with the more ordinary class of town-people.

At one time, from the excited feeling between the Catholic and Protestant portions of the crowd outside, an excitement fanned by various reports, there were symptoms of a battle, but the arrival of the ministers produced a calm by diverting the attention of the multitude.

The exercises consisted of an address to those assembled, and a prayer. Both were made in the hall at the foot of the stairs, and were listened to, in breathless silence, by the men who filled the lower portion of the house; with tears and some audible sobbing by the females in the chambers. The address of Professor — was cautious and painful. He spoke of the lessons to be drawn from the death of one so young — “in the opening bud of manhood and usefulness, and so recently full of health and strength.” He applied to the surviving friends the ordinary topics of instruction and consolation; but he said very little of the departed, which, considering that it was almost a clerical brother, seemed a significant omission, and struck a chill into the breasts of his auditors. The Rev. Mr. —’s prayer was more fluent, and his hollow tones reverberated with an awe-impressing effect; but he, also, much more slightly and vaguely alluded to the deceased than was his wont. He made amends by praying fervently that all present might be preserved from false dependences,

from every refuge of lies, from all the cunning devices of Satan, even when he disguised himself as an angel of light, (here every eye was directed, or at least, every thought, to the form of Atherton, who stood in the doorway among the bearers,) and that every stronghold of his, whether pagan or papistic, might speedily be overturned by the power of the Word of God, and so on, which was listened to eagerly, and found in every listener a ready interpreter.

The procession was formed. The pall-bearers took their places. There was only one carriage, occupied by the mourners; the citizens followed on foot; the students walked on before the hearse. It proceeded by an unusual road, which many, indeed, did not understand, until a pause occurred before the low building with a cross on the gable. Those whose duty it was to bear the coffin, when taken from the hearse, here refused to act; but six Irish labourers, decently clad in black, came forward and supplied their places. However, curiosity carried most of those present into the chapel, and it became filled. Unfamiliar, and some of them apprehensive, the crowd gazed upon the black hangings, which had not been removed since the morning service, (it was Good Friday,) and the candles burning by day.

The body of Walker passed a threshold, which

living it had never crossed; and psalms were recited in the ear of the dead, which living it had never heard; holy water was sprinkled on the inanimate flesh, which living had never used that salutary aspersion; lights burned and incense waved around that body, which living had never rendered like honours to the glorious Body of the Lord. Such was the Church's acknowledgment of penitence and faith, though testified at the final hour. Nor did she avoid his name, which once before she had uttered, when she bore him in baptism. She breathed it now in prayer, commending his spirit to the mercy of Him Who created it.

Thus ended the history so far as the principal actor was concerned, but for the subordinate, that is, our hero, there remained something behind. As the sun went down of a gloomy red that same evening, upon the leafless elms of New Haven, and the paschal moon rose opposite, round and vast, with the prophecy of the Easter solemnities upon its mighty disk, a pair of tutors returning from a walk, while the study bell rung cheerily, gossipped thus:—

“A boy like this cannot be permitted to triumph over us all.”

“The spirit of insubordination appears already. Nothing else was talked of in commons to-night, and

those who were opposed to Atherton's views sympathized with his victory."

"The weakest thing was brother ——'s speech at the grave—why should he speak at all?" said the senior of the two, contemptuously.

"The students dispersed, smiling and laughing. But I wonder that more decided measures were not taken to prevent that significant demonstration at the Catholic chapel."

"It was a mistake all round. Atherton, who (between us) is the very deuce among the women, persuaded Walker's sister, and she made the old man consent. But Master Alban has laid himself open to discipline in that visit to Walker. I suppose you know that he entered Dr. Hartshorn's house near upon midnight, by Miss Hartshorn's window."

"Shocking! scandalous! and he a professor! Isn't it a misdemeanor, a trespass, or something of that sort? Dr. Hartshorn should bring him before a justice of the peace."

"His daughter's share in it prevents his doing that. But there is nothing to prevent an investigation before the faculty."

"That 'll be rich. Atherton will be expelled—don't you think?"

"I am sorry for him," said the senior tutor, with

a look of mysterious knowledge, "but he has brought this thing upon himself."

The proceedings of the faculty of Yale College are always marked by promptitude. The morning of the day following, Alban was summoned before them. It is also a body of remarkable sagacity, which has ever tempered its instinctive jealousy as a government. They deemed it wiser to fall short of the severity desired by the public feeling than to awaken sympathy for the sufferer by the semblance of vindictiveness. A few of the older professors, whose natures were more despotic and their religious antipathies more violent, were in favour of expulsion; but more temperate counsels prevailed, and Alban Atherton (not without some touch of retributive justice for his New York pranks) was *rusticated* for three months—being the entire remainder of his college course.

The President's room was directly under Atherton's—"Awful handy for you!" said St. Clair, who tried to keep up his cousin's courage under these painful circumstances by a fire of constrained jests. All Saturday afternoon he heard the voices of those who were sitting there and deciding upon his fate; at six o'clock he went in to hear his sentence from the lips of the kind old President, as well as to receive the

“admonition” which was a formal part of the punishment.

The day which he had thus spent had been fixed for his first confession, and as soon as he could get away, he hurried to the Catholic chapel. He found it full of servant-girls and labourers waiting their turn, and crowding, not to say pushing, each other round the door of the sacristy in order to secure it. It might be nearly half-past seven when Atherton came in, and he remained more than three hours kneeling at one of the back benches, trying to recall the matter he had previously prepared, and to excite himself to contrition. In spite of his efforts at recollection, his mind wandered—now to the sentence which, in all its mild wording and severe sense, rung in his ears, now to the mortifying details of his trial, in which he might have said so much that he did not say, (in reply to attacks,) and omitted so much (that was indiscreet) which he had said; then to Walker’s death and funeral, his interview with the father and sister, and the probable effect of all upon his own parents, the De Groots, and all his near or distant friends.

At about eleven o’clock the chapel was at last cleared, and he entered the sacristy with a beating heart. The old priest rose from the confessional and met him.

"My dear sir, you must not think of coming to confession to-night. If I had had a suspicion of your being here I would have come out of the sacristy to tell you so. It is impossible, my dear young friend, that after what you have passed through to-day you can be sufficiently recollected to make a first confession. God will take the will for the deed. Return to your room and sleep upon it. To-morrow you will hear mass quietly, and in the afternoon, or Monday morning, whichever you prefer, I will see you here, and we can take it leisurely."

"On Monday morning, father, I must quit New Haven. I am rusticated."

"Have they gone so far?—Well," giving Atherton's hand a warm pressure—"thank God! thank God! you begin to suffer a little for the faith. What a favour to *you*, my dear friend! Now *don't* trouble yourself about this confession. Let me see. You go on Monday morning. Perhaps you will like to make a beginning to-night, and I dare say you can finish to-morrow."

"I think I will not attempt to do any thing to-night, if I can have an hour to-morrow altogether," said Atherton.

"Then I will hurry to my hotel and take a bite before twelve o'clock," said the priest, "for I have

two masses to-morrow, and to-day, of course, I have had but one meal. As that was ten hours ago, and I have been in this dreadful confessional ever since, I feel rather used up."

"My good father! and you talked of hearing my confession!"

"Why, to tell the truth," said the missionary with a gruff cheerfulness, "I hardly know how I should stand it if I did n't get something to eat before midnight. Not but that I've done it in my day, but this has been a hard week. *In vigiliis, in jejuniis*, often comes to my mind, Mr. Atherton. We stagger under a trifle of fasting for twenty-four hours—what would we think of the watchings and fastings of St. Paul?"

So on Sunday Alban came in the afternoon to the chapel, but found it closed. Not a soul knew why. He went round to the hotel. The missionary was gone, having been called away to a place thirty miles off to visit a person at the point of death. He had left a pencilled note for Atherton, which thus concluded:—

"Thank God, my dear friend, for this fresh disappointment, it being His will to try you a little longer. To be perfectly resigned to the will of the Almighty is better than to receive absolution with

ordinary good dispositions. Be humble enough to say from the heart *fiat voluntas tua*, and grace itself can do no more for you."

With faint steps the young convert approached his boarding-house at the hour of the evening meal. He was fasting, although it was the Queen of Festivals—the first Easter he had ever observed.

Looking forward to confession, and feeling pretty sure that under the circumstances the good father would give him absolution at once, he had entertained the innocent desire of making his first communion on that sacred day. The disappointment of both these expectations coming upon his academical disgrace,—conspired, with the exhaustion of his bodily powers and the moral reaction after the somewhat exalted state through which he had passed, to produce an extreme depression. His very faith appeared to have left him. The sublime Hope on which his soul had fed, identified itself with the illusions of the imagination. Could his eyes have been opened he would have perceived a dark and formless Being walking by his side, triumphing that his power was not yet at an end, and that one more temptation was permitted him, to which those of the world and the flesh were weak.

Mrs. Hart met him in the hall with some letters

which had arrived on Saturday, for Alban had lately taken a fancy to have his letters left at his boarding-house. By such a batch coming to hand at once, he divined a crisis, such as indeed he had reason to expect. As in duty bound he opened one from his father first.

“NEW YORK, *April 17, 1835.*

“DEAR SON, — Your mother and myself have been astonished at the communication just received from you. What you propose is an act of perfect *lunacy*. I can with difficulty realize that you are serious in it. I omit all reply to your long argument. I am astonished that the college faculty should not have informed me, when they knew that you were diverting your mind from your studies to these frivolous questions, which the whole world settled hundreds of years before you were born. You mentioned to me, before leaving home last vacation, that your mind was occupied in this manner, and I thought I then signified my wish with sufficient clearness, to the effect that you would postpone such matters until you have completed your college course. Indeed, it would be far better *never* to take into consideration any subject which has no practical bearings.

“The recent rise in — (which has very much surprised the rich ‘bears’) has realized the expect-

ations which I had confidently formed, and I anticipate a still further improvement. Thinking you may be short, I enclose you a cheque for fifty dollars, which please acknowledge.

"The proposed change of religion would be decidedly injurious to you in a quarter to which I need only allude. I speak from personal knowledge when I say that the opinion entertained of your sound judgment and *liberal views*, is the ground of the approbation which has been given by her parents to the preferences of a certain young lady.

"Yr. aff. father,

"SL. ATHERTON."

The next letter was from his mother.

"GREY STREET, *April 16, Thursday.*

"MY DEAR ALBAN,—Your letter has plunged me into the deepest grief. Words, my beloved son, cannot express the feelings with which I have again and again perused it. Surely it is a transient bewilderment. You confess that you were for a time sceptical, then (singular and incomprehensible) almost a Jew! These notions will also pass off if you give them time.

"What you say in condemnation of the religion of your sainted grandfather, your aunt Elizabeth, your

cousin Rachel, (who is going on a mission,)—not to say of your own mother—is dreadful! But you have not looked upon it in that light. When you do, you will repent, I am sure, of such thoughts as you seem to have had. It would break my heart, Alban, if I thought that you could really be given up to this awful delusion.

“Your father (although he has promised me to write you temperately) is very angry about your letter. He says that if you turn Papist or Jew (for he cannot make out which it is you mean) he will never see you again.

“Before you were born, it was my prayer, day and night, that (whatever else you were) you might be one of God's true children; and indeed I had hoped that my prayer was answered. Oh, Alban, I would rather have followed you to your grave than see you forsake the truth, and lose your soul!

“Put away the books which have perverted your mind, my dearest son; give up your proud reliance on your own talents, (ah, that is the great point,) and study your Bible with prayer to God for guidance—He will not fail to direct you.

“I have no heart to add more at present. If you will not take the counsels of those who are older and wiser than you, I foresee your ruin for this world

and the next, and for your parents nothing but shame and grief, where they have hitherto felt so proud and happy.

Your affectionate mother,

“GRACE ATHERTON.

“P. S. I have just heard, from a reliable source, that Miss De G., who has no doubt influenced *you* more than you are aware, is herself not too well satisfied with the step so hastily taken in opposition to the known wishes of her parents. Oh, Alban, will you not be warned?”

These letters touched our hero deeply. Could any thing be so certain as the evil of outraging these kind affections—the prime religion of nature and basis of piety?—*A man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.*—“How true the prophecy! How precise the warning!” thought Alban, as he broke the rich seal of a third letter.

“FIFTH AVENUE, Fer. 6 in Parasceve.

“DEAR ATHERTON,—Addressing a new-blown votary of the Christianity of the Middle Ages, I can do no less than adopt an ecclesiastical date. Your father tells me you are going to make a fool of

yourself as Mary has done, but with infinitely less excuse.

"Speculate as you will, Atherton. Protestantism is a shallow thing, no doubt, but do not think that because there are truths which it cannot measure or fathom, its opposite must necessarily be truth without alloy. It is but a few months since you hesitated between Judaism and Episcopacy, and but a few more since you were a fervent Puritan. Now you regard these past states as blindness. Wait a few more months and you will deem the same of your present stage of development. I do not mean (as some vulgar people would) that you have gained nothing, but that you have something yet to gain. You are young, and although you have a wonderful head for your years, no genius can compensate altogether for the want of that grandest and most fruitful experience whose domain is the inner world of reflection, — which time and self-study alone can give.

"I do not wish to appeal to any feeling or interest which you would regard as beneath the dignity of such a question. At the same time I think it right to tell you that since she has looked upon you as a convert, Mary's interest in you has sensibly diminished. Her imagination is no longer excited about you, and that is a fatal incident in the love of a

devotee. Mary thinks more of the cloister than of wedlock already, and if you were actually to join the Roman Church at this premature stage of your friendship, I greatly fear that she might never arrive at that passion-point where maiden resolutions melt like snow before the fire.

"Win and wed my daughter *first* — then profess her faith. The world will then appreciate your change, which now will be assigned to an interested motive.

"Let me hear that you have chosen the wise course of postponing an irrevocable step, at least until you can take it with dignity.

"Truly yours,

"E. DE GROOT.

"Alban Atherton, Esquire."

"How sage and how confident he seems!" thought Alban. "And Mary! It would be strange if she ceased to love me, because I had become actually a Catholic. And yet it would not be strange, for it is not like the ways of the Highest to bestow a rich earthly reward on those who leave all for His sake. I see how it will be. Flower of chastity! My bosom is not pure enough on which thou shouldst repose! He whose 'name is as oil poured forth,' has attracted thy virgin steps."

A sudden faintness overcame Atherton; the room swam around him; he looked about for help, but Mrs. Hart was gone; he rose and staggered to the sofa, on which he had just time to throw himself ere a darkness swept the room from his sight.

He lay motionless, but not unconscious, till on that black depth, as in a mirror, a bright scene became gradually distinct.

It was the interior of a beautiful chapel, the morning sun shining in at the high east window. A pure yet brilliant altar of white marble was crowned with a constellation of starry lights. A meek prelate in a rich robe stood before it; the sides of the chapel were lined with black-robed nuns, each in her oaken stall, the snowy wimple covering her breast, the snowy band across her temples. At the rail knelt two young females in pure white, one of whom was habited as a bride.

Alban could hear no words; but the brief and beautiful ceremony of taking the white veil took place in dumb show in the small, brilliant chapel. He knew what it was, although he had never seen it. When the novice turned from the altar with the plain veil of religion upon her head, in place of the rich bridal lace which had previously shrouded her, Atherton saw her features of incomparable loveliness:

they were those of Mary De Groot, and the bright vision gradually dissolved again till only her youthful form, still advancing towards him, remained visible. It approached till it seemed that he could have touched her, and then vanished.

CHAPTER V.

THE place to which our hero was rusticated, was a retired country village in the interior of Connecticut. Early on Monday morning he took stage for Hartford, the semi-capital of the little State, not content with one metropolis. From New Haven to Hartford was a day's journey in those times, and in the early spring a tedious one. The heavy and well-balanced vehicle went swinging and swaying through the mud, crawling up the hills, tearing down the declivities with a rocking and sweeping whirl that for the moment stirred the blood and half took away the breath, then crept on as before.

Atherton was too busy with his own brooding thoughts to heed much his fellow-travellers, or their

conversation, which was slight and desultory. At noon they stopped for dinner, after which several new passengers were taken in; the stage received its complement of nine inside, and two with the driver. The new company were more talkative. The recent events at New Haven were discussed, and Alban heard his own name freely mentioned.

"This young gentleman is a Yale student, I believe," said one of the old passengers.

"Are you acquainted with the young man Atherton?" asked a new passenger.

"I have some acquaintance with him," said Alban, in the dry New England manner.

"Is he so talented as they say he is?" inquired the new passenger. "I heard that it puzzled the Doctors of Divinity to answer his objections."

"There is generally exaggeration in these reports," replied Atherton.

"Is it true that he let himself down the chimney into a young lady's chamber and hid himself under the bed till she had retired?"

"No, not under the bed, but in the closet," said a morning passenger, with an air of positive information.

"Why, what a bad, impudent fellow he must be!" said a lady on the back seat.

"I never heard those circumstances mentioned," said Alban.

"Oh, I assure you they are quite true," said the morning passenger. "I was told by a friend of Miss —— Hornheart herself —— was not that the name? Miss Hornheart was dreadfully shocked, as you may suppose, ladies," (turning to the fair occupants of the back seat.)

"How old is Atherton?" inquired one of the ladies, addressing Alban.

"I should say he was something past twenty, ma'am."

"Young scapegrace!" ejaculated the afternoon passenger.

"He has been dreadfully dissipated without any one's ever suspecting it," said the morning passenger.

"Sly boots," interposed the afternoon passenger, with a wink at the eldest of the ladies.

"And worse than dissipated —— a very *dangerous* young man in a family."

"Oh, really!" exclaimed the two elder ladies in a breath.

"Dear me!" softly breathed the youngest, with a blush.

"I think you rather calumniate Atherton, sir," said Alban, colouring. "I belong to the same class in

college, and I certainly never heard any thing insinuated against his moral character."

"Oh!" cried the morning passenger, contemptuously, "I dare say you never *heard* any thing against him, young gentleman. Nobody had heard, till this came out. Sly boots! as you were saying, sir," (to the afternoon passenger.)

The afternoon passenger was a tall, large-framed, and well-fleshed man, in a suit of rusty black, with a narrow white cravat; quite evidently the minister of some Episcopal congregation in a rural district. He sat on the middle seat, with his great, heavy arm over the strap, and exchanged many little courtesies with the ladies behind him.

"I should like to have a talk with this Popish classmate of yours," said he, addressing Alban. "He and I would agree on many points. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church has always set its face against modern science. I like that," turning to the rest of the company; "modern science is little better than dealing with the devil, after all. These great discoveries! gifts of Satan all. Steam, Chemistry, Galvanism, and last, but not least, Animal Magnetism!"

"Do you rank Animal Magnetism with acknowledged scientific facts?" asked Alban.

"There is a girl here in Hartford at the present

time," replied the clergyman, with a keen look at the young student, "a girl in the clairvoyant state, who can see through blankets, and tell you what is passing hundreds of miles off."

"Tis true as the Gospel," said a gentleman in the corner of the front seat, who had not before spoken. "She sees all the interior organs in any one's body, (that wishes it, of course,) and describes all their conditions, so that a physician by her aid can prescribe as exactly for any disease as if he could take you to pieces like a watch. I have witnessed this myself."

"For my part I should object to being seen through in that fashion," exclaimed one of the ladies.

"And I too," said the second lady, who had a slight cough, "though I should like to know if I have tubercles."

The young lady only blushed.

"The first time that the Mesmerist made this clairvoyant girl see the inside of a human body—with the heart beating, the blood rushing through the great arteries, the lymph circulating, and so on—she was terribly frightened," said the stranger who had last spoken. "Now she is used to it, and thinks nothing of examining anybody that the operator requires."

"But where is the evidence that her seeing these things is not all pretence?" asked Alban, sceptically.

"Of course you must take her testimony as part proof," said the stranger, "but if you have sufficient evidence of her preternatural sight in many other incontestable instances, you cannot refuse to believe."

"I will tell you what happened to myself," said the Episcopal clergyman.

All expressed a desire to hear the clergyman's story, and he related a *very* wonderful one of a young girl who told the hour by a watch held at the back of her head, and described matters that were happening fifty miles off.

"In time we shall arrive at more wonderful things," observed the stranger in the corner seat. "Or rather, all miracles will be explained by some very simple principle. A few passes, you observe, sir, effected that extraordinary phenomenon which you witnessed in the mesmerized girl. By and by we shall learn to cure diseases with a touch. In fact, it is not more wonderful than that they should now be cured by some simple herbs."

"And what do *you* think of it, young gentleman?" said the clergyman, addressing Atherton.

"Why, sir, it appears on your own showing, that

you have had dealings with Satan," replied Alban, gravely.

"Pshaw!" said the stranger in the corner seat, "there is no such person as Satan."

The evening lights already sparkled in the windows when the stage rattled into Hartford. At the tea-table of the hotel the conversation was renewed upon Mesmerism, demoniacal possessions, and the forbidden arts. The stranger believed in magic, which he maintained was only the consummation of science. Matter, in itself nothing, was meant to be subject to the human will as a slave to a master. He thought that the world was on the eve of great discoveries, before which the barriers which separated us from the unseen would fall. His conversation breathed an intense desire to penetrate the profoundest secrets of nature and of time, and Alban, as he listened, could with difficulty withstand the contagious influence of these daring aspirations.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the northeast part of Connecticut, among the hills where the Yantic takes its rise, extends a bleak, almost woodless table-land, of some miles in length by about one and a half in breadth. It is not destitute of farm-houses, and a great road passes through the middle of it, which, for one reach of about a mile, expands into a wide common, where the housen (this old Saxon plural is still used in New England) are more frequent, and form the straggling village of Carmel.

At either extremity of this common rises a steepled meeting-house; for the old Congregationalists have split in Carmel, and the new school have raised a rival house of worship, at the distance of a mile from

their neighbours. On the road-side, nearly equidistant from the two meeting-houses, stands an old, white, pillared mansion, with fine old button-balls planted in a long line before it, and a garden in the rear; meadows and orchards on either side. The house formerly belonged to a great family in the State, and one to which our hero was nearly allied; but it had passed out of the name, and at this time was the parsonage, or rather the residence of the old school minister. This gentleman eked out his pastoral income by pupils, and was willing to receive, now and then, a rusticated student from his *alma mater*.

The stage-coach drew up, by a gray sunset, before the Rev. Dr. Cone's. The driver took off Alban's trunk, and set it down for him in the long piazza. The Rev. Dr. Cone himself came out to greet the new-comer. He was a man past the middle age, of a grave and dignified aspect.

"President ——," said Alban, offering a letter, "assured me that this would procure me the pleasure of pursuing my studies for a few months under your roof, Dr. Cone."

"I understand," said Dr. Cone, balancing the letter vacantly in one hand. "Walk in, Mr. Atherton"—glancing at the name written in the corner. "You

have come to a queer place, but you are welcome, sir."

A hall of small dimensions, with a square balustraded staircase, opened on one side into a spacious parlour, sparsely but handsomely furnished. The chairs were high-backed, solid, and heavy; a large wood-fire burned on the ample hearth. The room contained a piano, at which a little girl was sitting. She turned her head as the door opened, and Alban saw a sparkling brunette, with the wildest black eyes, and a shower of jetty ringlets falling on bare, slight shoulders.

"Ah!" said Alban's future host, and withdrew from the room which he had half entered. "Perhaps you had better walk into my study," said he, and with the word went to the opposite door.

The study was lined with rude but well laden book-shelves. Here, too, was a wood-fire, burning in an old Franklin. A school-desk ran along the front windows, but there was no one in the study, and the doctor, pointing Atherton to a seat by the Franklin, took what was evidently his own study-chair.

"With your permission, doctor, I will lay aside my cloak," said Atherton, for the room was warm.

"Certainly, certainly, sir," said the doctor, abstractedly.

Atherton threw off both his cloak and overcoat, and Dr. Cone regarded him curiously, glancing from him to the letter of introduction, which was still unopened.

"Perhaps I have mistaken — the nature of the affair," said the doctor, slowly breaking the seal of the letter, and looking at the young man with surprise. "I was under the impression —"

Here Alban was startled by his host's apparently chucking the open, but unread letter of the President into the fire. It was in flames in an instant. The doctor made a sort of effort to recover it, but it was consumed before he could seize it. He drew from the Franklin only a bit of blackened cinder, that quickly fell in ashes.

"Hem! disagreeable these things are," said Dr. Cone, in a low voice.

"Surely, then," thought Alban, "you might have been more careful."

The doctor looked so embarrassed at the destruction of the letter, that our hero felt the position of culprit, in which he had entered the house, entirely reversed. While he was reflecting how far he was bound, or even authorized, to supply the information which the burned epistle had doubtless contained, the door of an inner apartment opened, and a plump, well-looking

dame of forty entered the study. She stared slightly at Alban, and looked at the doctor.

"This is Mr. Atherton, my dear, (Mrs. Cone, Mr. Atherton,) from Yale College, who has come to pursue his studies, (did you not say so, sir?) for a few months, at Carmel."

"Mr. Atherton?" said Mrs. Cone, courteously. "It is not the son of Mr. Samuel Atherton, of New York, surely! Indeed! What, Alban Atherton! I am very glad to see you, sir. Why, I have known your mother ever since I can remember. Mr. Atherton is a grandson of General Atherton of Yanmouth, my dear. *Little* Alban! Why I have had you in my arms a thousand times!"

Mrs. Cone poured out a flood of questions relative to his parents. She had heard of his being at college and distinguishing himself greatly. A mother could hardly have greeted him with more warmth.

"And what is it brings you to Carmel, Alban? You have not been rusticated, I take for granted," said Mrs. Cone, laughing.

"Unfortunately, I have," replied Alban, with a slight blush.

"Why, what have you been doing to merit such a sentence?" demanded Mrs. Cone, with some surprise.

"The President wrote a letter to Dr. Cone, in-

forming him of my offence," answered Atherton, with embarrassment.

"Where is it, husband?" said Mrs. Cone, imperiously

"It is burned," replied her husband, meekly.

"Burned!" exclaimed the lady.

Her husband glanced significantly at the young man.

"How provoking," she added in a low tone, and with a sudden change of countenance. "I am really wearied at these annoying occurrences. I shall quit this house soon, that is certain!"

In uttering these ejaculatory sentences, which considerably mystified Alban, the lady seemed to have forgotten her curiosity in regard to the cause of his rustication. She abruptly asked how long he would stay with them, and where his trunk was; then saying that she must give directions to get a room ready for him, quitted the study, with a disturbed air.

In a few minutes she called to him from the hall. He found a couple of healthy-looking Irish lasses carrying his trunk up stairs, at her bidding.

"I fear it is too heavy for them to carry," said Alban, observing that the girls panted under the weight.

"Oh, never fear," said one, "this"—pointing significantly at the other—"is a strong girl."

"There's them in the house 'od take it up a dale asier," replied her companion, as they rested on the landing, "if they could but turn a hand to any thing useful."

"Hold your tongue, Bridget," said Mrs. Cone.

They got the trunk at last into a comfortable chamber, and Mrs. Cone dismissed her handmaidens. When they were gone she turned to Alban with an air of authority.

"Now, Alban—I must call you Alban, for you seem quite like my own child—I knew your aunt Betsey so well, and your mother, too, at Yanmouth, when I was a girl—and a wild thing as ever breathed—and you a delicate little boy—how you have grown! I am very proud of your college distinctions, your prizes, and being President of the Brothers' Society—they say that you are the best writer of your class—but what is the cause of your being rusticated?"

"According to the best of my knowledge and belief, Mrs. Cone, the real cause why I have been sent here is that I have become a Roman Catholic," replied the young man.

"A what?"

"A Roman Catholic," said Alban, smiling at Mrs. Cone's blank consternation.

"I have a great mind to box your ears," said Mrs. Cone. "Why, what do you mean? Your grandfather's grandson a Roman Catholic! Don't talk such nonsense to me, Alban! What have you been doing at New Haven that they sent you here? Come, I love you for your aunt Betsey's sake, and your mother's too. Tell me the truth.

It was with difficulty that Alban could make Mrs. Cone comprehend the truth, no part of which he concealed from her. In the course of his narration, the conviction, however, gradually dawned upon her mind that the young man was, at least, not sporting with her credulity. She was ready to overwhelm him with arguments, but luckily the bell rang for tea.

"Hurry down to tea," said Mrs. Cone, leaving him, "and let me charge you not to breathe a syllable of this to my husband, nor to any one else in the house. I have my reasons, which perhaps will appear in due season."

The tea-table was set (it is the New England fashion in country districts) in an ample and well-kept kitchen. On the side of the table opposite Alban sat three hearty boys, from twelve to fifteen years of age, Dr. Cone's private pupils; next to himself was a lady

to whom he was introduced by Mrs. Cone. as her sister. Her name was Fay, and the party was completed by the black-eyed little girl of whom Alban had caught a glimpse at the piano, and whom Mrs. Cone named, "My niece, Miss Rosamond Fay." Mrs. Fay was pale, and of an extremely delicate appearance; she coughed frequently and with singular violence; but when Alban turned to offer her some civility, he perceived that her features were eminently beautiful. Her eyes were the brightest and most finely set he had almost ever seen. Her voice, too, was soft and plaintive as a dove's.

The two Irish lasses, one of them blooming and luxuriantly made, the other darker, plainer, and a trifle stouter, remained in the background during the meal. It passed nearly in silence. Dr. Cone indeed attempted to put a courteous question or two to his newly-arrived guest, when one of the boys opposite, as Alban thought, commenced kicking violently under the solid mahogany table. To his great surprise, neither Dr. Cone nor his wife took any notice of this indecorum, although the latter frequently reproved one or other of the lads for some trivial impropriety.

"Sit up, William! Charles!" in a tone of grave remonstrance; "is that the way in which a young gentleman should help himself? Certainly, use a

spoon for your honey." — Here there was another kick under the table, so violent that Alban wondered the tea-things did not rattle, and Mrs. Cone became silent, while the boys grinned, and little Rosamond Fay but half suppressed a laugh.

Immediately after tea, family prayers were attended in the same apartment. Dr. Cone read a chapter from the Epistle to the Romans, accompanying it with a short exposition. Then Rosamond Fay, at a sign from her mother, went into the next room, where, on the doctor's giving out the evening hymn, she played a well-known tune on the piano, and the whole family joined in singing it with a very sweet effect. Alban took notice that the prettier of the two Irish girls, whom Mrs. Cone called Harriet, sang with a clear voice, but her less attractive companion, whose name was Bridget, did not sing, and sat with folded arms and downcast eyes. As soon as the hymn was finished, the family threw themselves on their knees, and the young Rosamond, gliding in from the parlour, knelt by her mother's side. Alban, on the contrary, took the opportunity of the noise this general change of position occasioned, to escape into the room which the young girl had quitted. Seating himself by the parlour fire, he could listen to Dr. Cone's prayer.

Suddenly, in the midst of it, while the good

minister was praying, as our hero thought, with unusual earnestness for protection during the night, particularly from the malice of demons and the assaults of evil spirits, there was a scream in the kitchen, followed by a crash of porcelain and a heavy fall. Alban sprang to the open door; the tea-things were half off the table; some broken cups and plates strewn the floor, and Mrs. Cone was endeavouring to save others which were just on the point of falling. Dr. Cone concluded his prayer rather abruptly, and the family sprang to their feet with a variety of exclamations.

"I told you that you had come to a strange house, Mr. Atherton," said Dr. Cone, passing his hand over his forehead, and drawing a deep sigh.

"Oh, look what they have done in the parlour!" cried little Rosamond Fay, and Alban, turning, beheld, to his astonishment, all the heavy chairs in the room behind him piled one on another, nearly to the ceiling, the stool of the piano being perched on top of all.

"Who are *they*?" Alban innocently demanded of the child.

"The Spirits!"

"My daughter!" said Mrs. Fay, reprovingly, for the little witch clapped her hands with glee.

It seemed, indeed, that the devil was really in the house.* The tea-table was again lifted up at one end, sending some half-dozen more cups and plates upon the floor with a crash; the pretty Harriet, while picking them up, screamed, and cried out that some one pinched her; Bridget fell on her knees and began to call upon the Virgin and Saints for help, and in the midst of all, a noise like some heavy body rolling down stairs was heard in the front entry or hall, the door leading from which into the parlour was suddenly burst open with violence, and Alban's trunk hurled

* Some people, who appear to be of the "Sect of the Sadducees, who believe neither angel nor spirit," have been offended by the introduction of these supernatural doings in Alban. All I can say, is, that there is sufficient evidence of such things having occurred, not to found a positive belief upon, but to *warrant their being employed in fiction*. The exorcisms described a little further on, took place at *Wizard's Clip*, in Virginia, about thirty years ago, as mentioned by the Rev. Prince Galitzin, in one of his admirable tracts; and the tradition is yet fresh on the spot; the house being still shown, where, every body will tell you, a Catholic priest laid a ghost, after various other ministers had failed. See also *SOUTHEY'S Life of Wesley*, for similar occurrences. As for Mrs. Fox and her family, (I may be wrong, but) I have always regarded them as impostors. At the same time, their making a gain of their pretended *mediumship* is not conclusive against its reality, as the woman mentioned in the Acts, whose "spirit of divination" St. Paul expelled, did the same, and brought her masters "much gain" by her art. By the way, the *Wizard Clip* ghost was a very singular one; it was a Catholic ghost, and taught the family the catechism. It treated the Episcopalians who attempted to expel it, in a way far more disrespectful than any thing described in Alban; and what is really curious, the family, who are of high distinction, became Catholics in consequence, and some of them are at this day among the ornaments of the Church.

into the room as if from a battering-ram. The hasp of the lock snapped with the violence of the concussion, the lid flew open, and with another turn the entire contents of the trunk, consisting of books and clothes, were scattered over the carpet.

Alban flew out of the room, and up the stairs, but in a few minutes returned with an aspect of blank astonishment. He had found the outer door of the hall bolted on the inside, and every thing in the story above quiet and orderly as a sepulchre.

It was midnight. Alban and Dr. Cone kept a sort of vigil over the kitchen fire.

"It is a month since we began to be persecuted in this way," said the Doctor. "At first I fancied that the boys were at the bottom of it. Then I suspected the servants of complicity, and that men were concealed in the house. Very soon, however, things came to such a pass as to preclude every hypothesis of natural, human agency. You have seen nothing yet! My books have been flung into the fire before my eyes by invisible hands, and with difficulty saved. A good deal of property has been destroyed, particularly clothing, as you saw that little boy's jacket and trowsers to-night cut into ribbons. Mrs. Fay and Mrs. Cone have had their bonnets secreted, (usually,

it was discovered, just as they were going to meeting,) and when found, it was behind some heavy furniture, crushed, and completely ruined."

"Human agency might have done this," observed Alban.

"True, and the suspicions of the ladies fell upon Bridget, our Catholic girl. They thought she might have done it to prevent their going to church."

"Why not as well suspect Harriet — or is she a Protestant?" asked Alban.

"She is, and has been one of the greatest sufferers all along. Her clothes are spirited away, and found, half destroyed, in some out-of-the-way place. And the girl has been pinched (the ladies say) black and blue."

"Pinching the maids! It is the old trick attributed to the fairies," observed Alban. "What is Harriet's character?"

"She is such as you see her: a pretty girl!" said the Doctor, grimly. "She would have left us if I had not promised to make good her losses. Of course, it would be very disagreeable to engage new servants under these circumstances, and difficult too. Bridget was frantic for going, at first, but her priest, whom, at my instance, she went some thirty miles to consult, advised her to stay. She was the first to say they

were spirits, and *then* we all laughed at her superstition."

"And suspicion fell upon *her*," said Alban, with a grave smile. "It is the only thing like a *motive*, that I have discovered yet, sir, in the acts of petty mischief which you relate, or which I have witnessed."

"At times," observed the doctor, looking round apprehensively, and lowering his voice, "I doubt there may be a motive, even for what looks like mere wantonness."

"And that is, sir?"

"The desire to communicate with the living," whispered the doctor.

Rap, rap, rap; rap, rap; rap, rap:—the whole kitchen resounded! Even Alban turned pale. The cold sweat stood on Dr. Cone's forehead.

"The petty, but irritating injuries inflicted seem to proceed, if I may venture to say it," proceeded the doctor, still lowering his voice, "from impatience that we cannot or will not understand them."

Rap, rap; rap, rap.

"Do you hear? It is an answer."

"Have you ever communicated with them in this way before?" asked Alban, rather solemnly, and giving the minister a piercing glance.

"Occasionally at night, after the family have retired," replied his host, trembling. "I sometimes fear that I have done wrong."

"It is written," said Alban in a firm voice — "'tis but last night that a peculiar conversation led me to examine the passage — 'Neither let there be found among you any one that consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer, or that consulteth pythonic spirits, or that seeketh the truth from the dead.'"

There was a faint scream — faint and peculiar: Alban had never heard aught like it.

"Had you never a dream to which you could not refuse credence?" asked his companion, unheeding of this strange sound. "Knew you never a dream exactly fulfilled?"

"I must answer both questions in the affirmative," replied Alban with emotion, "but one of those dreams, I had reason to suppose, came from above, and the other I yet doubt."

Both were now extremely startled to observe, all at once, that chairs had been placed on either side of them, so as to form with those which themselves occupied, a complete semicircle around the ample fire-place. Alban's blood froze in his veins at the sight (if one could say so) of this awful session of view-

less beings, prepared to participate in their midnight colloquy.

"They wish to converse with us," said the minister, with a sudden energy, and pressing Alban's arm. "Let us gratify them. I have thought of a way, if you have no objection. It is by calling out the letters of the alphabet. When they rap at a letter, you shall write it down, and so we can spell out word by word into a regular sentence."

An intense curiosity, despite his fears and scruples, overcame Atherton. The host, with wild eyes, extended to him some tablets and a pencil, which he hesitatingly received.

"I have no doubt but they can inform us respecting the future world and its employments"—(rap, rap, rap, on the floor at their feet)—"the state of the soul after death"—(rap, rap.)—"Do you hear?"

A heavy step was heard on the kitchen stairs, some one slowly descending. After a minute of expectation they were interrupted by the entrance of the girl Bridget, with a shawl thrown over her half-bare shoulders, and a large ruffled cap, as if she had hastily risen from bed. She looked frightened, and her great, black beads were clasped in her hands.

"What do you want?" asked her master, roughly. "Have you no more sense of decency than to come

down in that garb at this hour of the night, while there are young gentlemen in the house?"

"Och, indeed, sir, and I big a thousand pardons for comin' down, but surely I dramed them spirits was a murthering this young gentleman, and it was on my mind, sir, to ask you to step to his room (bein' I could n't) and see if all was right."

A sharp reproof evidently hovered on her master's lips, but Atherton interposed.

"Thank you, Bridget. You see I am safe. The Blessed Virgin will protect me, you know."

"Indeed, sir, and that's true, if you have light and grace to ask her. But maybe you'd condescend to put these beads round your neck for to-night. They are the beads of St. Bridget that I brought from ould Ireland, and there's a hundred days' indulgence for every one that slips through your fingers. No harm'd come near you, sir, with it round your neck, and I am safe with the scapular, sir, let alone that I said the third part of the rosary before I laid me down."

"Thank you, Bridget — thank you kindly. Keep your rosary, and pray for me." — He kissed the small metal crucifix attached to the bead-string, and returned it to her. The girl retired, not without offering the beads once more.

"You are a humorist, I perceive, Mr. Atherton,"

observed Dr. Cone, when the girl had disappeared. "I question, however," he added, somewhat gravely, "whether it is right to countenance such superstitions, even in jest."

"You had better put that question to the spirits, doctor," replied Alban, rising. "And, by the by, if you will excuse me, sir, I will retire."

The kitchen was now quiet. Quiet was the hall and his own chamber. But as he was entering the last, the door of Mrs. Fay's room, which was just opposite, opened with some fracas, and Mrs. Fay appeared with a candle in her hand. She attempted to shut the door instantly that she saw Atherton, but some obstacle prevented its closing, and while she quickly stooped down to remove it, he caught almost involuntarily a glimpse of the interior of the chamber.

The fair occupant had been writing; for a table was drawn close to the fire, with an additional candle, some writing implements, and an unfinished letter upon it. The bed was directly over against the door, and little Rosamond, who had apparently just started up, was hiding herself again under the bed-clothes. The object which had prevented the door from closing was an inkstand, and Alban perceived large and numerous stains of ink on the tasteful white wrapper of the beautiful Mrs. Fay.

CHAPTER VII.

THE season advanced, and even the dreary table-land of Carmel assumed somewhat of the smiling aspect of early summer. The great button-balls, lining the road before Dr. Cone's house, were covered with delicate green leaves, and spread a checkered shade on the old front piazza. The orchards were white and pink with apple blossoms; the garden was gay with those of the cherry trees and hardy plums. The cool air that blew from the hills over the plain, carried their fragrance on its wings. Still the in-door fires glowed night and morning, and only slumbered in white embers during the warmer hours of mid-day.

The singular visitation by which the old mansion-house was haunted had not ceased. Sometimes,

indeed, perfect quiet would reign for a week, so far as any supernatural disturbance was concerned; then the mysterious agency would break forth in manifestations of greater violence than ever. As time went on, the character of these singular phenomena changed. A great deal of petty mischief continued to be done, nearly exhausting the patience of every one, except quiet Dr. Cone and the ever-elastic Rosamond Fay. It was wonderful how patient Dr. Cone was, although he suffered considerably in his property, and something more in the reputation of his family. They kept it secret as much as they could, but events so marvellous could not be prevented from transpiring. Hundreds of persons came to see the operation of the "spirits," and although the family resisted such applications wherever they could, and both Dr. and Mrs. Cone assured their visitors that the stories which they heard were exaggerated, and that some natural method would probably yet be discovered to account for what at present seemed inexplicable, the idea gained ground that it was the work of the devil.

But within the family itself a system of communication with these unseen agents of mischief, was now quite established. It was ascertained, for example, that a request to them, couched in civil terms, would

procure at least the temporary cessation of any peculiarly vexatious demonstration. The method of interpreting the rappings, suggested by Dr. Cone to Alban, the former did not venture publicly to adopt, for nearly all the adult members of the family were of the opinion that it would be criminal to hold such an intercourse with beings who could only belong to the infernal hosts.

The communion season of Dr. Cone's church was now approaching. They had it once in two months, and some of the family remembered that the last occasion had been marked by peculiar outrages, bearing more the impress of malignity than any which had occurred before or since. In all instances of this kind it was remarked that one or two individuals were the special objects of attack. The pretty Harriet, and Eddy, the youngest of Dr. Cone's pupils, have been already mentioned; but there was a boy employed by the minister about his stable, the son of one of his poorer neighbours, who could not enter the house without some strange missile being hurled at him, and *he* averred (but Mrs. Cone declared it was only his imagination) that he felt himself dragged towards the well, whenever he accidentally approached it, as if some one were endeavouring to throw him in. He was certain that when sent to fetch wood

he was frequently hurt by the fall of large fagots; and once a tall wood-pile suddenly precipitated itself upon him as he was filling a basket for the Franklin. It was a miracle that he was not killed, and the lad made it an excuse for fetching no more. It was a half-simple lad, was Jake, and some of the stories which he told of his persecutions were too marvellous for belief. Harriet said that Jake pulled down the wood-pile upon himself, and that for her part she was more afraid of him than of the spirits. Like many beings of that unhappy class, Jake's animal propensities were more fully developed than his mental powers, and if ugliness could provoke the malice of demons, his ungainly slimness and satyr-like countenance would account for their hostility.

The Sacrament Sunday at Carmel happened to synchronize with a festival of the Church, on which Episcopalians also usually celebrate the rite of communion, and Mrs. Fay being a pious member of that denomination, proposed to go down to Yantic Falls on this occasion, because there was an Episcopal church there. The distance was not more than ten miles; Dr. Cone lent his gig, and Alban had offered to drive. All that week the disturbance in the house was nearly unremitting. The knockings were incessant, day and night; the furniture was thrown

about remorselessly, panes of glass were broken daily, clothes and books were burned; a bed was found in a blaze at noonday, and the flames with difficulty were extinguished; Harriet was wounded in the cheek by a pitcher, and a new dress which she had purchased at Yantic was missing from her closet, and not to be found on the strictest search. But what was more alarming, Eddy was taken with fits of screaming every evening. Dr. Cone punished him in vain. Mrs. Fay's delicate health suffered from the incessant nervous agitation which all this produced; besides that, she had her private troubles, which she concealed as much as she could. Little Rosamond told Alban that her mother was visited by the spirits every night. It was singular that the most earnest and polite requests for a cessation of the infliction, had no longer any effect. Mrs. Cone would sometimes fly into a passion and abuse the unseen mischief-workers, but that only procured an increase of annoyance.

"I would leave the house, Mr. Atherton, were it in my power," said Mrs. Fay on Saturday afternoon.

They were walking in the piazza, arm in arm, for Alban had become a favourite with the invalid. As they passed the parlour window there was a crash; a dark object shot swiftly by, and fell upon the grass of the court-yard. The window-pane showed only a

round hole as large as a grape-shot; the dark object was a common poker. The force necessary to effect a passage through the glass without producing a larger fracture, was at least equal to that of a well-charged rifle. There was no one in the parlour.

"If I could only get a peaceful night before going to communion to-morrow," said Mrs. Fay, in a sweet, but despairing tone.

"You have never tried the experiment of asking them to desist," observed Alban.

"Never yet, but I really think I must try it. Lately it has not succeeded so well."

"I object to it on principle," responded Alban. "The favours of the devil, or of spirits malicious and lost to goodness, are more to be dreaded than their hostility, which after all is controlled by a higher power. They can do nothing but what is permitted them, as they have repeatedly confessed."

"Yet if I could gain a tranquil evening and an undisturbed night before communion," urged Mrs. Fay. "Really I feel that I must. If that boy's screams should be renewed to-night, I think I shall go distracted. Besides, Mr. Atherton, they knock upon my head-board at night."

"Do they really?"

"I have fancied it was Rosamond, you know, and

then, as if they read my thoughts, it would occur when her little arms and limbs were fast imprisoned in mine—oh! it is beyond endurance. *You* are never troubled in your own room, Mr. Atherton?"

"Never."

"Is it because you are so good, or because you are so bad?" said Mrs. Fay with a smile. "I have thought at times that if I would do some wicked thing they would let me alone."

"If you will be patient under it till to-morrow," said Alban, "as we ride down to Yantic, I will explain to you a way by which I think you may be exempt from future annoyance."

"You have several times spoken to me in that mysterious manner, Mr. Atherton. You talk as if you had a charm, such as that poor superstitious Bridget believes in."

"Yet Bridget is never assailed as the others have been. Neither her person or property have been injured."

"Well, do you suppose that it is because she crosses herself and mutters her prayers, whenever any strange thing happens? For my part," said the beautiful Mrs. Fay, "I believe the secret is that she is not so pretty as Harriet. You laugh, but these beings certainly have the strangest caprices. Now, there

is my Rosamond. Why should they not cut her clothes into ribbons as well as Eddy's? To be sure, it would be shocking to treat a little girl so."

"You think that Rosa is spared for the same reason that Harriet is persecuted? I believe, my dear Mrs. Fay, that we shall be entirely foiled in endeavouring to penetrate the motives of beings who are in a state so different from ours—beings devoid of hope, freed from concupiscence and passion, yet possessed of power, will, and understanding. I have perplexed myself much to arrive by analysis at what must be their condition, but humanity winds itself too closely round me. How know you that the spirit within you—the familiar tenant of your own clay—is not endued with a latent malice exceeding that of any of these disembodied ones whose presence we have been made so strangely to feel? They were our companions but a few days since, if we may believe them. The sweet chains of flesh and blood bind us still, and if they enslave, restrain us. A moment—I think of it often with a shudder—may convert a polished youth or a modest-seeming woman into a malicious and obscene demon."

Mrs. Fay coughed—her violent cough. She applied her handkerchief to her mouth, and took it away again dabbled with blood.

"Do not be alarmed," said she, sweetly smiling on him. "This is a common occurrence. But I must go in. I fear that your conversation has induced me to remain out longer than was prudent."

It was evident, however, to Alban, that she was considerably agitated. He supported her into the parlour, and persuaded her to recline on the old-fashioned chintz sofa.

"Don't call any one," said Mrs. Fay. "I shall be better directly."

A very singular rap commenced, apparently over the invalid's head. None of the sounds which Alban had heard in the house were any thing like it. At the same instant the great family bible on the stand slowly opened. Mrs. Fay in a low voice implored him to ascertain for her the passage marked. Ather-ton had always refrained from gratifying his curiosity in this way.

"Of what use is it?" said he, earnestly.

She sprang up and went to the book. He was extremely surprised to see her tear away the mark with violence. She closed the Bible, and returning to the sofa with an air of desolation, clasped her hands. The rapping continued. Suddenly the door of a closet flew open, and a large blue junk bottle danced out, and went dancing and tumbling round

the room. It was fearfully ludicrous, and our hero, involuntarily, broke out laughing. Presently out flew another.

"Oh heavens!" exclaimed the unhappy invalid in a tone of misery, "I can bear it no longer. I ask a truce till to-morrow night. Let me pass this night in quiet. Whoever you are, I beg it as a favour."

The bottles rolled over on the carpet and were quiet; the rapping ceased; and a bit of white paper came floating down as if from the ceiling, and fell into Mrs. Fay's lap. She took it, glanced at it, and passed it to Atherton. It was inscribed in a singular but legible hand, with the following words:

"You shall not be disturbed."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE house was filled with the peculiar bustle, prophetic of a religious quiet, that belongs to a New England Saturday night. Jake brought in armful after armful of wood from the pile, to fill the boxes for Sunday, and flung it in without a word. Biddy strained the contents of her foamy milk-pail into the pans, and ranged the latter on the pantry shelf without one being upset. Hatty finished mopping the painted floors, set the tea-table, and relieved the mighty oven of its hot and fragrant loaves, of the vast pan of baked beans, and the flat cakes of gingerbread, without once complaining of being pinched, or pouting her pretty lips in despite, because her table was lifted some inches from the floor, or a beautiful crusty loaf

was sent spinning into a distant corner. The family partook of the evening meal and attended evening prayers with the feelings of ship passengers in a calm after boisterous weather, or just arrived in port, and who can scarce believe the absence of that restless and dizzy motion to which they have become accustomed.

The boy whose screams had lately alarmed them, as the hour of his seizure approached, became drowsy, and falling asleep at prayers, was carried up to bed. Whether it was the sudden withdrawal of excitement, or some other cause, the whole family seemed to drop off much earlier than usual, nor did they fail to sleep so soundly as to make the next morning's breakfast considerably later than was usual even on Sunday. Jake brought round Dr. Cone's smart-looking chaise, (this was Madam's innocent vanity,) with the shining-coated bay horse and well-appointed harness. Alban was not displeased to drive a lovely and elegant lady into Yantic, on one of the finest Sundays in June, himself attired in his sprucest gear.

Mrs. Fay had a lovely spring bonnet, trimmed with lilac. It was a New York hat, ordered as a pattern by the most fashionable milliner in Yantic, of whom Mrs. Fay had taken it at no extravagant price, about a week previous, with fear and trembling in regard

to its probable fate. Well might she tremble, for she had had one bonnet hidden in a drain, and another (but that was only a straw) ruthlessly crammed behind a sofa. And if the beautiful invalid — who, to those around her, seemed on the verge of the grave — had an apparent weakness, it was her love of elegant costume. But perhaps that was a part of the facile propriety, the fine perception of the becoming in conduct, which eminently distinguished her. Rosamond was always most suitably dressed. Being only turned of twelve, she wore shortish frocks and pantalots. This bright Sunday morn the little girl was arrayed in a cherry-coloured silk, neatly made, with a shadowy Leghorn crowning her jetty ringlets and dark-bright countenance. Mrs. Fay very properly placed her daughter betwixt herself and Alban, and the trio were a snug fit for the gig.

And now, lest the reader should imagine some romantic mystery in the domestic relations of Mrs. Fay, inasmuch as we describe her certainly not as a widow, yet living, it would seem, apart from her husband, of whom we have hitherto made no mention, we will observe that she was the wife of an officer in the U. S. Navy, and that Lieutenant Fay was absent on a cruise. There was undoubtedly a reason why his name was so much avoided in the family of his

wife's sister, that Alban, for instance, during a stay of seven weeks, did not remember to have heard it, except that once or twice Rosamond had, as if inadvertently, spoken of "papa." But our hero was aware that Mrs. Fay corresponded regularly with her husband, and the brightest glow he had seen on her pale cheek was on a day when he brought her from the Carmel P. O. a thick letter, stamped, in red ink, "U. S. Ship Pacific."

For one thing, Atherton knew that the pay of a lieutenant was moderate, and he guessed that Mrs. Fay had very little money to spare. He had inferred from occasional expressions which she had let fall in regard to her prolonged stay in a house where she suffered such terrible agitations, that considerations of economy made it necessary. But as they were drawn along swiftly and silently over the smooth turnpike, Mrs. Fay seemed to him to have shaken off an incubus. She had never conversed with him, or prattled to her daughter, so naturally and gayly.

"Sister,"—so Mrs. Fay termed Mrs. Cone—"sister would have been glad to prevent your being my beau this morning, Mr. Atherton!" said she, with a charming smile.

"I cannot comprehend why," returned Alban, very sincerely. "Certainly I am a more suitable one than

Jake, in every respect, I flatter myself," and he also smiled.

"Sister talked to me quite seriously about your being a handsome and agreeable young man, and my husband being away, and so on, till I was half persuaded that I was going to do something very improper; and then I thought that it was *too* ridiculous! Why, I remember you when you were a baby, (as I told sister,) and am almost old enough to be your mother. And finally," (laughing merrily,) "I could not abide the thought of such a gallant as Jake."

"Oh, mamma, *I* would never go to Yantic if Jake was to drive the chaise — would *you*?" cried Rosamond.

"I feel quite flattered, Miss Rosa, that you prefer me to Jake," said Alban, gravely.

Rosa blushed and was silent.

"You are a great favourite with Rosa," said her mother.

"Oh, mother! how can you say so — right to Mr. Atherton's face! He is not a favourite of mine any more than William Russel or Eddy Edwards is. I like Mr. Atherton, mamma, because he is so polite to you — you know I always told you so."

"And because aunt Cone told you that you must

not, on any account, fall in love with him," said her mother, archly

"Oh, fie, mamma! *My* mother tells tales out of school, Mr. Atherton, don't she? But she will never let *me* do it."

"Aunt Cone seems to think me a dangerous character," said Alban; "but really, her precautions do not strike me as the most judicious."

"I asked sister," observed Mrs. Fay, still smiling, "if there was any thing against your moral character, and she was obliged to confess that, so far as she knew, it was unimpeached. She said, indeed, that you had been 'rusticated,' but declined telling me what had been your offence."

"I am capable of committing very bad actions," replied Alban, smiling evasively.

"The life of a Christian," piously observed Mrs. Fay, "is a continual conflict with the corruption of his own heart."

"If one could be sure that one was really combating," answered the young man. "Mrs. Cone, now, tells me that she is *sure* she loves Christ — she is sure she has passed from death unto life. Nothing can convince *her* that religion (her own religion, of course) is not a reality. Do you suppose, Mrs. Fay, that she has any conflicts, or is ever worsted in them? or how

is it that she does not feel what a great saint once said, that *no man knows whether he is worthy of love or hatred?* ”

“I do not like the Presbyterians—they are so self-righteous,” said Mrs. Fay, “although I believe that there are good Christians in all denominations.”

Alban smiled.

“I was brought up in the Episcopal Church,” continued Mrs. Fay, “and so was Fanny! but she married a Presbyterian minister, and of course she joined that Church. Now that is what I would not do, Mr. Atherton—leave my Church! My husband never interferes with my religion. To be sure, he is not a religious man.”

It was natural for Alban to inquire under what form of faith Lieutenant Fay was nominally ranked, and he was greatly surprised when Mrs. Fay, after a glance at Rosamond, replied that her husband was a Roman Catholic.

“He fell in love with me at a ball, when I was only seventeen,” said she, with her beautiful smile. “My friends opposed it on the ground of his being in the Navy and a Catholic. But I was captivated by his careless, manly manner, his ardour, and his handsome uniform, I suppose, and about two years after we were married. Rosamond was born before I

was twenty, and her father never saw her till she was three years old. That was the hardest absence I ever had to bear, although our next—our little boy”—Mrs. Fay dashed away a tear—“my husband never saw. Then he was ordered to the West Indies, and I went to Pensacola to be near him, and there my other little girl was born. She was a delicate child from the first, and as her little brother had been carried off in teething, I resolved not to wean her as long as I could help it, and that is the way I lost my own health. And after all, she took the scarlet fever in that fatal year, and died of it. Her father was absent too, but, by that time, I was used to bear such things alone; nor have I seen him since: you see I have had my sorrows, Mr. Atherton.”

“Dear mamma,” exclaimed Rosamond, drying her eyes, “papa will be made a commodore one of these days, and then he will take us to sea in his ship, and we shall have better times.”

“Now that I have been so communicative, Mr. Atherton,” resumed Mrs. Fay, after they had driven on in silence for some time, “I hope that you will tell me what is that charm you spoke of yesterday by which I can be free from the persecution of these spirits (if such they are) while we stay at my sister’s. I assure you that I shall be glad to have recourse to any thing

reasonable, for, apart from the agitation which I suffer from their attacks, I really cannot afford to lose so many valuable articles from my wardrobe. We are too poor, ain't we, Rosamond?"

They were now entering the beautiful town of Upper Yantic, and the bells were already tolling for service. Alban did not reply to Mrs. Fay's question, while they were driving past some of the old Atherton homesteads, which he had visited thirteen years before, with his aunt Elizabeth and cousin Rachel. But when they emerged into the open road again, and saw the white spires of the Falls gleaming in the leafy distance, he said,

"Did it never strike you, Mrs. Fay, what a curious religion is depicted in the New Testament? I mean about demoniacal possessions, and the power given by Christ to His ministers to cast out devils. He seems to give it as a perpetual sign. '*In my name shall they cast out devils,*' — '*they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*' This power certainly must exist still in those to whom it was given, if our religion be divine."

"But miracles have ceased," said Mrs. Fay.

"Is that in the Bible?"

"No, I believe not."

"Since the devils are come back," said Alban, "it

is time to have recourse to the power which formerly expelled them. I am not at all surprised, myself, that the Kingdom of Darkness should be making a bold push in New England, to regain a portion of its old dominion over the bodies of men. Unless it be driven back by the old spiritual arms of the Apostles, we must look to see demoniacal possession soon reëstablished. These Presbyterians, certainly, can do nothing in this line; but the ministers of your Church pretend to derive their orders from the Apostles. Why don't you get your pastor here in Yantic to visit Carmel, Mrs. Fay, and compel the man-hating demons to return to their abyss?"

Shortly after, the easy-going gig glided into the rural street of Yantic — a sun-lit road, an umbrageous common, a wild hill-side, villa-like mansions. The organ was playing when they reached the church-door. It ceases even while Alban is carefully handing out Mrs. Fay and half lifting down the dark-eyed Rosa; and as they enter, they see the congregation already standing, and the white-robed minister is saying the *Dearly beloved brethren*. There were two ministers in the desk, in one of whom Alban was surprised to recognise his friend, Mr. Soapstone, and in the other, his mesmeric acquaintance of the stage-coach.

CHAPTER IX.

As soon as the service was over, Alban went up
he chancel to speak to Mr. Scanstone. A careless

convert to Rome might already be discerned in the zealous Anglican minister. Mr. Soapstone gave our hero a cordial shake of the hand, and introduced him to "the rector of the parish," the Rev. Dr. Patristic.

"Mr. Atherton and I have met before," said the latter, with a jovial glance, "and I can't say that even his name is a surprise. By the by, Mr. Atherton, you came in, I noticed, with an old friend of mine, Mrs. Fay, (lovely woman.) I knew, of course, that you were staying at Dr. Cone's. Well, you must both come and take pot-luck with us. I will speak to Mrs. Fay as soon as I have changed my cassock for a coat."

So saying, the rector hastily withdrew into a sort of dark closet or passage under the pulpit, whither Mr. Soapstone had already retired, and whence both speedily emerged in their ordinary garb. Alban waited at the rail to say, in reply to Dr. Patristic's invitation, that he meant to take Mrs. Fay to his uncle's.

"What, old Deacon Atherton's on the plain! Is the boy mad? You'll get a fine dressing if you show yourself there. And with Mrs. Fay of all persons! Why, your uncle is the bluest and bitterest Puritan in all Yantic. And besides, you will get nothing to

eat but cold dough-nuts and gingerbread, for they never cook any thing on Sunday. No, no, come to the rectory. We have got a prime quarter of lamb and mint sauce, and I rather think Mrs. Patristic has a batter pudding in preparation, which you will find vastly more agreeable than the rod which is in pickle for you at your uncle's."

The rectory truly seemed the abode of creature-comfort. Mrs. Patristic, a fresh-coloured and plump dame, preluded the dinner by an egg beaten up with wine for her husband and Mr. Soapstone, the latter of whom really required something, having made a step in advance since the preceding Christmas by receiving the communion fasting. Alban, too, played a very good knife and fork, for although so dreamy and so gentle in manner, the boy was no milksop, and here the host encouraged him both by precept and example. The ample frame of the rector of Yantic required a large pasture. The sociability of the party was aided by some choice wine, (which your sound churchman never finds amiss,) and it was soon very difficult for Mrs. Fay and our hero to realize the scenes they had lately witnessed otherwise than as an ugly dream. Certainly there was nothing ghostly about Dr. Patristic. His commanding, yet seductive, eye spoke of the world of sense, and his

rich masculine voice had nothing in it of the hollowness of the tomb. A goodly number of "olive plants" surrounded his table, from a fine girl of eighteen, his eldest, to a rosy-cheeked boy of five, his youngest born. Of course, the Doctor made himself agreeable to Mrs. Fay, and Alban divided his attention pretty equally between the fresh-looking Mrs. Patristic and her no less blooming daughter. The latter had a cheek soft and rich as a peach, and while Atherton chatted with her, Mrs. Fay's beautiful gray eye often roved to them from her imposing and fluent host.

Alban had promised Mrs. Fay to bring forward the subject of the spirits, but for some time he found no opportunity. At length the conversation turned on Mr. Soapstone's asceticism. Dr. and Mrs. Patristic both considered that the young clergyman carried the mortification of the flesh to a frightful extent.

"What think you of tasting no food till sunset, Mrs. Fay? Nothing else deserves the name of fasting, according to Mr. Soapstone. He says it was the mode of the Jews and primitive Christians."

"He is more strict than the Roman Catholics," replied the lady. "Lieutenant Fay once kept Lent when we were at Pensacola, but we always dined at noon."

"No Romanist ever fasts," observed Mr. Soapstone,

austerely. "As you say, even in Lent they are allowed a full meal at twelve o'clock. Then there is the collation in the evening, and 'custom has introduced' a cup of tea or coffee in the morning, with a bit of bread. This is not fasting, unless it be fasting to take three meals a day."

"If it be true that 'this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting,' Mrs. Fay," said Alban, "Mr. Soapstone is just the person to rid us of our persecutions at Carmel."

"What persecutions?" demanded the rector.

Dr. Patristic's countenance sobered into an expression of profound interest, as he listened to the account which Mrs. Fay and Alban now proceeded to give of the disturbances in Dr. Cone's house.

"We have talked over similar matters before," said he, with a significant glance at Atherton. "Dr. Cone has always been a believer in Mesmerism. I remember that several years ago he was full of certain revelations delivered by a clairvoyant boy."

"It is not the first time, then, that the doctor has meddled with forbidden knowledge," observed Alban.

"I have heard strange reports about noises being heard at Carmel," said the rector, "but I took for granted that it was the silly exaggeration of some old women. Mrs. Fay and you have astonished me.

How very strange is that incident of the billet being thrown down! And that horrible junk bottle dancing out of the closet!"

A thrill of horror ran round the table, but Rosamond Fay laughed.

"It is the greatest amusement of this child," said Atherton, "to run and pick up the things that are thrown about the house."

"I must pay you a visit at Carmel," said the rector, "and see for myself. No human hand can do what you describe as being done."

The rector's curiosity was excited to such a degree that he resolved to visit Carmel that very evening after the second service. To the scandal of the Puritans at Yantic, and even of his own flock, who marvelled at such style in a minister, Dr. Patristic kept a pair of fine bays and a sort of curriole, which he was accustomed to drive on Sunday evenings, really to exercise the horses, but ostensibly to hold service in a neighbouring village. Mrs. Fay and Atherton readily agreed to stay for an early tea, and start at the same time with their host. Mr. Soapstone was to accompany his ecclesiastical superior, to try the effect of an exorcism. Alban never ceased to impress upon Mrs. Fay that if any minister of her Church could lay the evil spirits at Carmel, Mr. Soapstone,

being full of faith, an ascetic, and a sort of confessor, would certainly be able. For we must not omit to mention that Mr. Soapstone had been finally driven from New Haven in consequence of the unpopularity of his views; the strong anti-popery feeling excited in the community by the death of Walker having required a victim more important than our Alban. The whole thing, indeed, was now traced up to his Christmas-eve sermon, the evergreen cross, and candles on the communion table.

Dr. Patristic not being an ascetic, but a husband and father, insisted on Mrs. Fay taking a seat in the curricule, an arrangement which Atherton was at first minded to resist as an impudent invasion of his rights, but a gentle whisper from the lady herself procured his acquiescence. The gig received the two young men and Rosamond. A red, red sunset soon faded over the hills, and the nearly perfect orb of the already risen moon brightened the stern-featured landscape. Over the moon-lit road, now rising to surmount a hill, now sinking into a valley, the chaise chased the curricule, the single horse the pair, and the former lost no ground, though flecked with foam from the ardent rivalry.

"And what news from New Haven?" demanded our hero, just touching the willing steed.

"Not much. Your cousin Henry is engaged, they say, to Miss Ellsworth."

"Is that all?"

"Miss De Groot passed through on her way to enter a convent."

"Ah!"

"You knew of it, I suppose?"

"I am not surprised."

"An immense grief to her family, it was understood. Some said that she had quitted them clandestinely, but the Everetts told me that was entirely false."

"Of course — it is too absurd."

"She was travelling with a couple of nuns, and the mob of New Haven with a lot of students came near attacking the hotel."

"Miscreants!" said Alban, with an astonishing vehemence.

"The notion was that these terrible nuns were carrying off this young girl, and that once they got her into a convent, she would never be allowed to come out."

"And so they wanted to rescue her, even against her will? It was rather a generous idea, after all," said he, with a slight cordial laugh.

"The New England people, Atherton, hate Popery

in every shape. The more amiable in appearance, the more they suspect it."

"It is a spiritual system, and they are carnal."

"The common impression is exactly the reverse."

"Yes, because by spirituality is understood vagueness. Protestantism knows Christ only as a lovely abstraction, and shrinks like a scared fiend from his bodily presence."

Mr. Soapstone gravely assented to this strong proposition, for fancying himself quite pure from all stain of Protestantism, no one more ready than he to send Protestantism to Coventry. Alban was irritated by this conceit, and as our hero became silent, the Anglican minister began to talk about his present superior.

"I came to Yantic," said he, "supposing that Dr. Patristic was a true Catholic-minded man. But he has only a smattering of the Fathers, and no idea at all of the Church. Yet he thinks he knows every thing. In regard to the sacrament, he adopts the Non-juring hypothesis of an Eucharistic body distinct from the natural, and that the consecrated bread itself is the only Body of Christ we ever receive."

"And what do *you* think of it?" inquired Alban.

"I believe with the Greek Church and the whole body of the Fathers, that, after consecration, what

was bread before, is the real Body of Christ, and the cup His real Blood. From Justin Martyr and Ignatius down, there is but one voice on this subject in all Christian antiquity, although the word Transubstantiation did not come into use till a comparatively modern period."

"I suppose then," said Alban, "that when Dr. Patristic to-day after service gave you a double handful of the communion-bread to consume, this was the reason you knelt down in the chancel to eat it, instead of standing as he and the rest did. It looked rather funny, but you believed it was the real Body of Christ?"

"Assuredly."

"And the contents of that huge chalice which one or two nervous girls, I noticed, came near spilling when they took it into their hands for communion, you believed to be the real Blood of Christ?"

"Certainly, Atherton."

"To-day being a great feast, nearly all the devout members of your Church must have received communion—say half a million of persons in all, (a large estimate perhaps.)—how many of these, do you suppose, think as you do about it?"

"Perhaps two or three individuals—perhaps not one," replied Mr. Soapstone, heroically.

"And the rest had as little idea what they were receiving as the mice who took what was left on the floor this morning. If the Ark of God smote the Philistines with plagues, and slew the men of Bethshemesh for prying into it, I wonder greatly at the impunity of your people in eating without discerning the Body of the Lord. Does God, year after year, permit the commission of such horrible wholesale sacrilege?"

"True," groaned Mr. Soapstone. "It is very distressing, especially when we remember what the Fathers say, even in the second century, of the care used by the primitive Christians to prevent a particle of the sacred Body falling to the earth, or a drop of the precious Blood being spilt. I am quite with you there."

"But how can you remain in your present communion with such feelings?"

"With a view of calling it back from its errors," replied Mr. Soapstone. "Our Church does not claim infallibility. If fallible, she may be in error. If in error, she ought to be set right. Before Henry the Eighth's time, the Church of England held Transubstantiation. I believe as she believed then."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Alban. "The essence of a Church is in the profession and inculcation

of truth. Where there is not identity of doctrine, the identity of a Church vanishes. You are no more the same Church which existed in England before Henry the Eighth, *than a changeling is the same child with that whose cradle, name, and inheritance it usurps.*"

After some desultory conversation on this point, which the Anglican minister would by no means concede, to Alban's surprise, his companion fell back upon some of the popular objections to Transubstantiation itself, urging them, not against the tenet indeed, but against the practice of communion in one kind.

"To reason in this way," said Alban, "is to fall below the region of pure, unclouded ideas into the mist of the senses, and to betray as gross an ignorance of spiritual laws as the clown does of natural, who, because his ponds are not emptied by night, refuses to believe the revolution of the globe on its axis. Come now, with this pretended philosophy, and analyze for me the *germ*. Explain how it is, that in a speck of albumen, so minute that it needs a microscope to discover it, are contained all the manifold characteristics of the class, the order, the genus, the species, and the variety, to which the future individual belongs—all the transmissible peculiarities of both his parents, bodily and mental—the red hair

of one, the club-foot of another, the insanity or genius of a grandparent. And how does that same speck communicate the spiritual effects of the fall, and cause the new being to be infected with concupiscence, devoid of justice and sanctity, and an alien from God? These questions solved, I will explain the rationale of *concomitance*, and the life-giving virtue of communion."

The young Rosamond, nestling in her corner of the gig, with her slender limbs crossed, to take up as little room as possible, listened with an attention which verified the proverb about the ears possessed by "little pitchers." But ten miles of good road are soon got over by willing steeds. At a trifle past nine the curricie and gig stopped almost at the same moment at Dr. Cone's gate. Mrs. Cone came out into the piazza to reprove her sister for choosing to return by moonlight with her young beau, but her thoughts were driven into another channel when she saw Dr. Patristic, with a half fatherly, half courtierly air, conducting Mrs. Fay up the gravelled walk to the house.

CHAPTER X.

THE first sounds which saluted the ears of the visitors on entering, and indeed before entering, were the shrieks of the child Eddy, who had been going on terribly, said Mrs. Cone, ever since sundown. The quiet of the Sabbath had not been disturbed till that hour, when, just as the sun dropped below the rim of hills, stifled cries were heard proceeding from the chambers. After a brief search, following the sounds, Eddy had been found in the closet of Mrs. Fay's room, perched (goodness knows how he ever got there!) on a shelf so high that a grown woman could barely reach it by the aid of a chair. The lower part of the closet was a press, with hooks for ladies' dresses. It was with difficulty that Dr. Cone and the eldest pupil had

succeeded in dislodging the poor little fellow from his dangerous position, for he resisted with screams every attempt, until it was discovered at last that a cord was noosed round his neck, and attached to one of the hooks before mentioned, as if with the design of hanging him. This was the most horribly malicious purpose yet betrayed by the invisible persecutors of the family. Ever since, or for more than an hour, the boy had lain on the floor of the room into which he had been conveyed, uttering incessant screams, but apparently unconscious of what was going on. The village doctor had been sent for, and had administered a powerful medicine, which hitherto had produced no effect. Such was the account given by Mrs. Cone to her visitors, and confirmed by their own observation, as they stood by the child in his dim chamber. The two elder pupils and the two Irish girls were watching by him.

"It's a divil he has," observed Bridget, pausing in her beads. "If yer riverince could but spake a word to cast him out."

"Nay, it's but fits, the doctor says," returned Harriet, "and what could his reverence do for fits?"

"This is demoniacal possession," said Dr. Patristic, preparing to retreat from the room.

Some low raps on the dusky walls quickened con-

siderably the rector's flight. In the cheerfully lighted parlour, the nature of the visitation was further discussed. Dr. Patristic betrayed a good deal of timidity, particularly when Rosamond Fay, who was visibly delighted at the rector's fears, finding that the spirits were slower than usual in their demonstrations, slyly pushed over one of the heavy chairs when no one was looking.

"Rosamond," said her mother, after reproving the child for this feat, and checking the untimely mirth which followed its success, "Rosamond is the only person in the house who has never shown fear on these occasions."

The young girl grew red, and hid her face in her mother's lap. Mrs. Fay merely stroked the black-ringleted head with a quiet motion of the hand which could scarcely be called a caress.

"I wish Mr. Soapstone would begin his exorcism," said Alban. "I have great faith in that."

"If Dr. Cone has no objections, I think we might do something in this case," said the young clergyman, modestly.

Dr. Cone observed with patient courtesy that several of the neighbouring brethren had given him the benefit of their prayers. If these gentlemen thought that those of a minister of their Church would prove more

efficacious, they were welcome to try. The truth was, that the good doctor, as well as the family in general, would have been glad of relief from any source. He had felt compelled to write to the friends of the afflicted boy to take him home, and justly apprehended, with the continuance of the infliction, the loss of all his pupils, not to speak of the injuries he received in his property, reputation, and comfort. In former times the whole world believed in demoniacal agency, but now-a-days few people would be found to credit any thing of the sort, so that the least imputation to which he was liable was that of being easily imposed upon.

There then arose a brief contest of professional courtesy between the rector and his assistant, which should officiate on this trying occasion. But Dr. Patristic was resolved not to meddle more than he could help with spirits of darkness, and the younger clergyman, not without some appearance of uneasiness, yet overcoming natural fears by an undaunted spirit and a faith in his own vocation, left the room to assume his cassock and bands, surplice and stole, from a bundle which he had brought in the curriele box. He reappeared a figure calculated to awe even spirits. In one hand he bore his prayer-book, and in the other a large vial, from which he presently poured a colourless liquid

into a bowl placed by Mrs. Cone, at his request, on the table.

"What is that?" demanded Dr. Patristic, aghast.

"Some water from the font, which I saved after the baptism this evening," returned the assistant. "It has been solemnly blessed in the administration of the sacrament, and I deemed it could not but possess some power to quell the evil spirits whom baptism has ever been held to dispossess.

"It is Protestant holy-water!" said Alban.

"Really, brother S.," returned the rector, "I doubt if our Church ever contemplated, much more authorized, such an application of the water of the font."

"She authorizes us to bless it, and does not prescribe what shall be done with it afterwards," replied the young clergyman. "And in the reign of Charles I. I find that holy, or blessed, water was used in the Church of England by Laud, Andrews, and some others. So I am not without precedent."

Mr. Soapstone, therefore, proceeded. First, he opened the great Bible and read with much solemnity a chapter from the gospel containing the promise of our Saviour that his disciples should cast out devils in His name. The scene was deeply impressive, and even awe-inspiring, but less so, perhaps, when the young minister, closing the book, invited those present

to join him in the Litany. When, however, those petitions were recited which pray that "Satan may be finally beaten down under our feet," and "that those evils which the craft or subtlety of the devil or man worketh against us, may be brought to naught," the voice of the reader became earnest, and most present were sensible of an emotion of awe. All were kneeling except Alban and Rosamond Fay. The latter had begun to laugh when Harriet, who was sent for on the score of her being an Episcopalian, responded somewhat louder than her wont; and in order to conceal her merriment, the little girl was forced to retreat behind the sofa, where she remained curled up on the floor till the prayers were concluded.

It was a favourable sign that the knocking, which was usually troublesome at prayer-time, ceased entirely during the Litany. Mr. Soapstone used not many vain repetitions. Rising from his knees he sprinkled the font-water round the room, and upon the persons present, except Alban, who, with a grave gesture, declined any share in the aspersion, and the youthful Rosamond, who, apprehensive perhaps for the cherry-silk frock, when she saw her turn coming, sprang to her feet and took refuge behind our hero.

"It is quiet now," said Mrs. Fay to the latter, in a half-whisper, when Mr. Soapstone had left the room

to say a prayer and sprinkle some of the consecrated element over the little sufferer up stairs.

"Perhaps it is going to succeed," replied Alban, in the same tone of voice. "We shall see presently."

The minister returned, and all being indeed hushed, even to Eddy's shrieks, concluded with an appropriate collect and the benediction. Scarcely was the latter uttered, when the great Bible from which he had read the lesson, flew open. The passage marked was in the Acts, the xixth chapter and 15th verse. All crowded to read it, but ere it could be finished by Dr. Patristic, whether it was that he leaned too heavily on the stand, or from a supernatural cause, one end flew up; the Bible, the candles, the holy-water, bowl and all, went rolling off in all directions. One of the candles blazing up on the carpet, caught Mr. Soapstone's long surplice, and in a trice the minister was enveloped in flames. Every body fled from him, the women loudly screaming, and but for Atherton's presence of mind in throwing him rather irreverently down and rolling him in the rug, Mr. Soapstone might have paid for his temerity with his life. A scene of confusion and clamour followed, such as had never occurred before. As one of the candles had been extinguished in falling and the other had been intentionally put out by Mrs. Cone,

when the conflagration of the surplice was arrested, the room remained in darkness except for the moonlight shining in at a side window. There was much wild running hither and thither from purposeless alarm, so that the scene was like an incantation of witches. The pretty Harriet ran against Dr. Patristic, who lost his balance and tumbled over a chair, dragging the girl with him in his fall. Mrs. Fay lay on the sofa, terrified rather than hurt. All our good Episcopalians in truth were prostrate. Rosamond bent almost double with suppressed laughter, and over all rose Eddy's piercing screams.

A loud knock was heard at the front door, and all other sounds suddenly ceased.

All listened. The knocking was repeated. It was in vain that Mrs. Cone, coming in with a light, commanded now the boys, now Harriet, to go to the door and see who was there. Such terror had been struck into every heart that no one dared stir, till, on the knock being heard a third time, very quick and impatient, Alban, who with Rosamond had been inquiring into her mother's situation, seeing that no one else would, himself went to the door.

"Sir," said the stranger, "your horses have run away with your carriage."

"My horses!" exclaimed Dr. Patristic. "Give

me my hat! Soapstone, the horses have run away — let's after them at once!"

And the rector of Yantic, forgetting his fears and recent discomfiture, rushed from the house, followed, with an inferior degree of impetuosity, by his less interested assistant.

"Won't you walk in, sir," said Dr. Cone, now advancing and courteously addressing the stranger, who still remained on the threshold.

"Nay, my good sir," replied he, "I have myself met with a misfortune. The runaway equipage came violently in contact with the light wagon in which I was just passing your house, and we find that a bolt has been broken, which must be repaired before we can proceed. The young man who is with me has gone on to your neighbour, the blacksmith's; but I do not like, at this hour, to trespass so long as I may be obliged to wait."

A renewal of the invitation, and cordial assurances that it would be no intrusion, overcame the stranger's scruples.

He entered with a frank air, and took a seat near the stand which had been overset, but which was now on its legs again, and the candles replaced on it. His appearance was rather prepossessing. He wore a black frock-coat and black neckcloth,

notwithstanding the warmth of the weather, and had a red ribbon round the neck, probably serving to suspend a locket, or other memorial, in the pocket of his waistcoat. His thick black hair was closely cut, and the razor had not spared a single vestige of whisker or beard, to break the outline of a dark but regular physiognomy. A piercing eye and a calm gravity about the mouth gave him a commanding aspect, although the facial muscles were quite free from the wooden sternness of New England, and it seemed as if it would take little to relax his features into a smile.

This further appeared when he entered into the usual topics of conversation, courteously started by his hosts, such as the weather and the roads, and met their characteristic inquiries as to his destination and motive for travelling so late on Sunday evening. The stranger evaded this inquisition with good humour.

"You are bound to Yantic, I suppose, sir?" said Dr. Cone.

"They say it is a wise man who knows whither he is bound till he arrives at the journey's end," replied the traveller, laughing. "Pray, sir, to return your question, what place is this?"

"It is called Carmel," said Dr. Cone.

"Carmel!" said the traveller, thoughtfully. "A

name of many associations. Was it not at Carmel that the prophet Elias defied the worshippers of Baal to a trial?"

"The prophet Elijah," observed Dr. Cone.

"Ah, yes, Elijah or Elias, I believe it is the same," said the stranger, with simplicity.

It might be that twenty minutes thus elapsed ere the two Episcopal clergymen returned, having abandoned the pursuit of the fugitive horses in person; but the rector had engaged a countryman to follow and bring them back. And while Dr. and Mrs. Cone were yet offering a hospitality for the night—which their guests perforce accepted—the young man, of whom the traveller had spoken, returned with the blacksmith himself, to say that it would be impossible to repair the accident of the wagon before morning.

"I must have daylight to do it, sir," said the son of Vulcan. "And, any way, I could not get you started before midnight. It's well on towards eleven, and my fire is out."

"Good reason, my friend," interrupted the stranger. "But is there a public house in this Carmel?"

Dr. and Mrs. Cone consulted each other apart, and then cordially offered the stranger a bed. In retired places in America, a passing traveller is always wel-

come, particularly if he be intelligent and gentleman-like; and in this instance, the hosts might be conscious that they were partly responsible for the stranger's mishap; while the fact that his arrival had been marked by a complete cessation of the frightful disturbance in their house, coupled perhaps with a fear that it might recommence at his departure, animated their hospitality still further, and made them press the offer with a warmth to which the traveller, not without surprise, at length yielded. The broken wagon was drawn to the smithy, the stranger's horse received into the doctor's stable, his valise brought into the house, his travelling companion was accommodated by the smith himself, and Mrs. Cone, bustling and cheerful, got out fresh bed-linen, and caused supper to be prepared for her unexpected guests.

"Alban," she whispered to our hero, "you must put up with the sofa for to-night, and resign your room to Dr. Patristic and Mr. Soapstone, (I wish they were both in Guinea!) for the strange gentleman must have the little room, (the prophet's chamber.) I suppose he will be contented, as he does n't seem difficult."

The traveller had resumed his seat and was fallen into a profound revery, from which he at length

emerged only to take a book from his pocket and settle himself quietly to read, saying, "May I ask the favour, madam, to be shown to the apartment you intend for me, a few minutes before supper;"—and forthwith he became completely absorbed in his book. Supper in due time was ready, the stranger was shown to his room, and Rosamond Fay, whose bright eyes had scarcely been taken off from him since he entered, immediately whispered, turning to her mother and Alban, "I wonder why he wears that red ribbon round his neck."

When the stranger returned, the red ribbon had disappeared. The first thing on his reëntrance, the great Bible, now replaced on the stand, flew open, and he started. Rosamond ran to read the passage aloud.

"Oh, mamma! it is marked with a red cross.—*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*"

"What is the meaning of that?" asked the traveller, approaching the book with a frown.

Rap, rap, rap! Rap, rap: the perplexing noises which old Sam Wesley heard.

"What is that?"—And he started again. "Is the house haunted?"

"By demons," said Alban.

"Come in to supper, sir," said Dr. Cone, "and we will tell you all about it."

And the stranger slowly made the sign of the cross from the forehead to the breast.

Nothing had been said but a brief grace by Dr. Patristic, when the stranger, his plate untouched, again demanded an explanation, which only could be afforded by narrating more instances of the same kind. Piece by piece—some of the family rather exaggerating, others perhaps falling short of the truth—the whole history of the visitation came out. When Alban described (for the rest shunned that point) Mr. Soapstone's attempted exorcism, the stranger smiled.

"Still," observed he, "the principal object seems to have been gained, or why do I not hear the cries of the lad you speak of?"

A shriek, up stairs, from Eddy, causing a general start and shudder, answered the question almost ere it had escaped the lips of the questioner.

"Have you or any of your family," demanded the traveller, addressing Dr. Cone, "ever sought intercourse with spirits, by consulting fortune-tellers, or pythonists, (that is, persons having familiar spirits,) or pretenders to the second sight, or clairvoyants, or by using any charms or divinations yourselves?"

Dr. Patristic and Dr. Cone both looked guilty, and

the latter confessed to having had to do with clairvoyants, but maintained, with some warmth, that theirs was but a natural state in which the latent faculties of the soul were extraordinarily developed. Dr. Patristic shook his head at this, while the stranger replied,

“So the professors of magic have ever reasoned. Every thing real is natural in one sense, but there is a lawful order in the acquisition of knowledge, as well as in other things. Our natural senses, reason, and divine revelation, are the only legitimate sources of knowledge. If, in attempting to pass these limits, you find yourself in the power of demons, you have only yourself to blame.”

The screams of the demoniac boy, though only occasional, for his strength seemed somewhat exhausted, impeded sleep. Few in the house but listened awestruck on their beds. Dark and malignant was that spirit from the deep, who, the first perhaps for ages, had burst the restraint imposed upon his accursed race, and dared openly to manifest his ancient lust and power of torment. So at least deemed most of those who heard him.

Alban had volunteered to sit up with Eddy, who could not safely be left alone for an instant, and Mr. Soapstone charitably insisted on sharing his watch. Dr. Patristic was at first considerably nervous about

sleeping alone in the adjacent room, until Dr. Cone, after visiting the child for the last time before retiring, went in to confer with the rector of Yantic, and these two worthies were soon in deep conversation on the mysteries of the spiritual world. Atherton and the young Episcopal clergyman insensibly fell to whispering on the same topic.

"My greatest difficulty in ascribing these things to diabolical agency," said Mr. Soapstone, "is the absence of apparent motive. Satan, why should *he* play such tricks? They are unworthy the prince of darkness."

"Well, I think there are several clear marks of his presence," returned the clear-headed student:—"a power above human; malice in its use; a restraint upon its exercise; and a general tendency of the whole in the long run to glorify the Eternal Ruler by whom it is permitted."

"Yet seems it not strange even to you, Atherton, that these infernal powers are permitted to defy and insult our religion in any form, to mock it by sacrilegious representations?"

"Not stranger than that heretics are permitted to travesty the priesthood, the sacrifice, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, in their profane and perverted rites. It is not enough," said Alban, warmly, "that

you impose your trumpery notions upon men, but you expect the very devils to revere the cheat! Earth, no doubt, has some respect for solemn shams: Hell has none!"

Eddy half rose up and grinned horribly. He was but half-clothed, for except by tying him it was found impossible to prevent his stripping off his garments. While the family were at supper he had made one desperate attempt to get into the stranger's apartment, but Bridget had fortunately locked the door. Bridget had shown the stranger to his room, and after he had left it, might have been seen to kneel outside the door and pray.

The young men were about to resume their conversation, when the demoniac again showed signs of trouble; a step was heard in the passage; Eddy made one bound into the furthest corner of the apartment, and the strange traveller entered.

He was not habited as before. A coarse, dark-brown woollen robe, with a long scapular hanging down before and behind, flowed to his feet, unconfined even about the waist by cord or belt. The red ribbon was again around his neck. Slightly bowing to the young men, he said, with quiet authority, "I want to see this boy," and immediately approached the possessed. To the astonishment of all, Eddy broke forth

in a torrent of curses and abuse. It was not loud, rather muttered like the rolling growl of some incensed animal, but such abominable oaths and imprecations, such a filthy stream of obscenity and blasphemy, never issued from human lips.

"*Immundissime spiritus, tace!*" said the stranger, laying his hand firmly on the boy's crouching head. "*In nomine Jesu Nazareni adjuro te.*"

The boy spat in his face and was silent. Eddy had naturally a sweet countenance. It was now upturned to the stranger's with an expression of revolting malignity.

"What is thy name?" demanded the latter sternly.

"Elias Walker," said the boy, between his teeth.

Alban started.

"Speak truth in the name of God."

"Edward Fay—"

"Remember—*in nomine*—"

"*Legio!*" shouted the boy at the very top of his voice.

"Is there a cause wherefore thou art come, and what cause? *In nomine*—"

"Ask *him*," in the same tone, and pointing to Atherton:—"him and yonder woman."—The boy used the coarsest of appellatives, and pointed in the direction of Mrs. Fay's apartment.

"Speak truth," returned the stranger, "as thou fearest Him who is so near us both."

The boy faintly clutched at the red ribbon which was just visible at the stranger's throat, and sunk on the floor as if senseless.

The stranger slowly turned to the appalled witnesses of this scene, and fastened upon Alban his dark, penetrating eyes.

"You are a Catholic, young sir? That good girl Bridget told me you wanted to see a priest. Please step into my room for a few minutes. This gentleman will not fear being left alone with the child."

The "prophet's chamber," in truth, had in it little more than the Sunamitess gave Eliseus:—a "little bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick." On the bed lay a fine Roman surplice and purple stole, which the monk, (as he evidently was,) without asking Alban any further questions, immediately put on. Having thus done, he seated himself in the solitary chair which the little apartment afforded, and laying his hand authoritatively on the table at his side, said, "Kneel there."

For a moment the haughty blood rushed to Alban's face, at being thus ordered, but in a moment the emotion had passed, and, understanding that this father knew his wish to confess, he humbly knelt, while the monk, having murmured, "The Lord be

in thy heart and on thy lips," — with a rapid motion of benediction, added, in the same tone of abrupt command as before,

"Say the *confiteor*."

Alban obeyed. The moment he reached the *mea culpa*, the stranger demanded, shortly, "When were you last at confession?"

"Never," replied Atherton.

"Never?" said the priest, slightly turning round, for he was leaning with his elbow on the table, and his hand over his eyes.

"I am only a convert, and have never had an opportunity of being received into the Church."

The Carmelite was silent for a minute, and then said in a kind, softened voice,

"You have been baptized?"

"In infancy, by a Congregationalist minister."

"Accuse yourself, my son, with candour, but without scrupulosity, of those things in your past life by which you are conscious of having offended God."

Alban continued on his knees nearly two hours. Unexpectedly as this confession had come upon him he was abundantly prepared for it. If he faltered, the priest, without appearing anxious that he should proceed, assisted his memory by a quiet, skilful

question. His tears wet the little table. At length his voice died away in the conclusion of the *confiteor*, and he covered his face with both hands.

“My dear son,” said the monk, “you have made a confession marked, to all appearance, by those qualities which are requisite in a good confession—sincerity and integrity. The humility you have displayed cannot but call down upon you the benediction of the Almighty, who has said in words familiar to your ears, *I dwell with the man that is of a contrite and humble spirit, and to whom shall I have respect but to him that is poor and little and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words?* You have had your evils—enough to teach you that in yourself you are no better than others; but with the proof they have afforded you of your own frailty, you ought to be thankful that you have been kept, perhaps by Providence as much as by grace, from that ‘foul and lavish act of sin’ which, as the poet says, inflicts such deep and lasting wounds on the soul.* In regard to what is more recent—those violent inward temptations of which you speak—think not too much of *them*. Preserve

* I remember hearing it said in Rome of certain young English converts, that it appeared they had never lost their baptismal innocence.

a right intention in all things, and go forward with a sweet and holy courage. Lift the eyes of your heart above this earthly sphere, and fix them on the perfections of your God. Meditate, my son, on the tender love of the Holy Trinity for the race of men: the Father's goodness in creating you, that of the Son in redeeming you, and of the Holy Ghost in effecting your sanctification. Consider Jesus Christ expiring on the Cross for you, or lingering in the Blessed Sacrament to be your food and victim. Remember that this life must be to you as it was to Him, one of unceasing conflict, humiliation, and suffering, in order that the life to come may be one of happiness, triumph, and rest. Avoid, of course, all consent to sin, and especially every outward act, which of itself proves the consent of the will; but these apart, be courageous, calm, serene, hopeful, manly. Yes; let your piety be manly. You pray a great deal, it seems. It is well; it is necessary. But remember that one act of unfeigned humility is a prayer more efficacious than if you recited the whole Breviary from beginning to end. Use every means of grace, and confide in nothing but God."

The priest questioned him in regard to his baptism. Alban had never doubted its validity.

"It may seem strange," observed the monk, "that so great a gift as regeneration, which is the gate to eternal life, should be suspended on the right performance of an external act of this kind. But it is not more strange than that the gift of existence, which in one sense is greater, (for unless we existed, we could not be regenerate,) should be suspended on the coincidence of outward circumstances far less solemn. It is necessary to a valid baptism that the matter and form, that is, the water and the words, be morally united, so that while the baptizer is pronouncing the latter, he may be fairly considered to wash the baptized. The sect-ministers generally have no idea of matter and form in a sacrament, or of the necessity of uniting them, and as they generally *sprinkle*, often while the infant's head is covered with a cap, it may easily happen that only a few drops of water, too minute to *flow* upon the surface, may touch the child. Now that would not be baptism. I have seen even an Episcopal minister first pronounce the child's name, pour his hollow hand full of water upon its head, and then say, *I baptize thee, &c.*: that would not be baptism either. In short, as the slipshod notions of these sects do not permit them to prescribe, as the Church does, such a manner of administering the sacrament as to preclude the possibility of these defects,

we cannot safely assume the validity of their baptisms, and they must be repeated as doubtful, unless we have positive proof to the contrary."

"The two ladies in this house were present at my baptism," said Alban.

"By all means, then, we must question them before proceeding further," said the monk.

As soon as Alban, confessed but not absolved, had risen from his knees, the monk said to him with a smile,

"What meant the evil spirit by referring me to you and the beautiful lady? You know not? The enigma may be solved one day. At present we must try the effect of an exorcism, for which I have a competent authority. We shall need holy water—*real* holy water. Will you get me a little salt and a capacious bowl?"

Alban departed on this errand. The back stair descended from a room occupied by the older boys, both of whom were asleep. Breathless quiet reigned throughout the house. Just at the landing of the stair was a low door opening into a garret-room where the servant-girls slept. As Alban passed it, he heard the raps, not loud but decided. These raps upon doors had been of frequent occurrence, and were always understood as implying an invitation to enter,

or if it was a closet, to open it. He disregarded the hint, and went down stairs. Returning in about ten minutes with a salt-cellar and large bowl, he perceived the smell of fire in passing the same door, and the raps were repeated. Having carried in the articles to the priest, he returned hastily and knocked at the girls' room. There was no answer, and the smell of fire being now strong, he opened the door. A dim lamp burning on the floor, discovered a slight smokiness in the air, yet the two Irish girls slept profoundly on separate cots. Since Eddy had ceased to scream, slumber had sealed all eyes and steeped all senses but those of the monk and Alban. The latter passed on between the beds of the girls to a door in the side of the apartment. This was the room of Mrs. Fay. A red flame illumined it, proceeding from the bed. Breathless he approached, lifted the muslin valance of the white-curtained bed, and lo, on the carpet a little pile of kindlings all in a light blaze, which already darted its snake-like tongues along the hempen sacking towards the light valance and curtains. Above, two soft faces lay still and close together on the dusky white of the pillows. He touched Rosamond; she awakened her mother.

"Your bed is in flames—nay, be not alarmed."

Rosamond's limbs gleamed for a moment in the

red light, as she sprang out; her mother glided from the bed like a spirit. Alban threw on water—what the pitchers contained—then flinging the curtains within the bed, out of reach of the flames for the moment, proceeded to uncord the bedstead. Meanwhile—more thoughtful of their modesty than their safety, or that of the house—the mother and daughter robed themselves, with palpitating hearts. It seemed an age that passed; the valance was in flames before the bed's head was uncorded. Alban stepped boldly on the bed, which sank through upon the soaking carpet, drew the curtains quite out of the reach of the flames, which now encircled him, and completed the work of uncording. The fire beneath was smothered, the light valance went out like paper, and darkness descended upon the room.

“Is it Rosamond? Ah, Mrs. Fay! I was trying to find the door and went the wrong way. I will find it now and fetch a light.”

He brought the lamp from the girls' room. Mrs. Fay took it to light her candle. Her hand trembled, but her face was calm. She was already dressed.

“Rosamond, my love, thank Mr. Atherton,”—half reproachfully, for the little girl was shrinking behind.

Rosa, whose ringlets were in wild disorder, and

her frock half hooked, at her mother's word, sprang forward, threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him. Even a little girl's warm, quick kiss seemed to embarrass Atherton. He was retiring, with a downcast glance, when Mrs. Fay detained him.

"Mr. Atherton, one moment pardon me. You were speaking of your baptism the other day. I was then just going to tell you of a dispute, which arose at the time, about its validity, but sister made me a sign to hold my tongue. Your family, you know, was of great importance in Yanmouth; and as there were several Episcopalians like ourselves present at your christening, we described the way it was done to our clergyman, who said it was no baptism. He was a terribly high churchman, to be sure, and afterwards turned Roman Catholic. After what you have done for Rosa and me, I cannot keep from you a fact which you may regard as important. When it occurred, I was just of Rosa's age."

He passed out between the cots of the sleeping maids, and having deposited their lamp where he found it, without a glance to the right or the left, rejoined the monk in the "prophet's chamber." The Carmelite listened, with his piercing eyes wide open, to Alban's relation.

"What was the maiden name of these ladies?

And yours is Atherton? Is it so indeed? Strange are the ways of Providence. *I* was that Episcopal clergyman, Mr. Atherton — now, by the mercy of God, a poor Carmelite. Well, we will examine into the matter more closely in the morning; but let us now return to this demoniac.”

Eddy was still lying in the corner of the chamber where he had fallen. Soapstone had thrown some clothes over him, and had afterwards fallen asleep himself in his chair. He became roused from his doze to behold the grave Carmelite, with book in hand, and holding the end of his stole over the prostrate child, reciting rapidly the prayers prescribed in the ritual for the exorcising of persons possessed by the devil. Alban held a light and a vessel of holy water, from which, at intervals, the exorcist sprinkled.

In the midst of the third exorcism, at the words *et ignis ardebit ante ipsum*, the boy threw off the clothes and arose. It seemed that he was going to make a dash at the holy water, but he stopped short, gazing at Atherton with a horrible look of fear. Thrice the boy shrieked — an unearthly shriek, a cry of anguish unutterable, sinking into a deep, hollow, vanishing moan — and fell languidly. The priest caught him. They all together raised and laid him on the bed.

CHAPTER XI.

DAY has dawned. Minute crimson clouds—the *avant gardes* of the sun—floated in a sky clear as a bell. The glittering plume of the morning star trembled, to speak poetically, in the rosy East. Dewy were the plains; misty and dark blue the hills. The cock, as the old epopee would not fail to notice, crowed in the farm-yard; the horse already cropped the June meadow with crunching teeth and smoky snuffing nostril; the fresh-breathed maids came forth with their milk-pails from the brown farm-houses.

In Catholic countries the *Angelus* bell would invite to prayer and the tapers kindle on the altar for early mass, whither the labourer would repair to sanctify

the day by assisting at the morning oblation. The Church loves early hours. Protestants delight in the sentimental witchery of evening, in the exquisite languor of sunset, the unreal charm of moon and stars, throughout the year. They enjoy "night services," with bright gas-light, and crowds like a theatre, and a fervent preacher, soothing and exciting at the same time an exhausted nervous system. The religion which begins and ends in feeling is necessarily so; but a religion of practice cannot thus arrange itself, because the evening being followed, not by action but repose, whatever impression could be made at this unseasonable hour, would pass away without fruit. *Compline*, which is the last sweet and brief office of the day in the Roman Church, and never varies in more than a few words, a hallelujah in the Paschal time, a doxology on the feasts of the Lord — *Compline* is supposed to conclude ere the last fading of the vesper twilight. In practice it is said much earlier. Catholic priests almost universally rise early, and are engaged in the duties of their calling, personal and public, for hours ere Protestant ministers quit their conjugal beds. The moral influence of this early activity, in the long run, is incalculable. *His* heart is not easily made impure by the foul illusions of a bloated sensuality,

who rises before light to meditate and pray. That first victory over sloth fortifies the will; the cool breath of morn assuages the fever of concupiscence; and the matin worshipper feels upon his soul a cooler breath, from the Eternal Mount, imparting to it an adamant temper, against which the edge of temptation is quickly turned.

The wagon-bolt was replaced by sunrise, and the monk's companion waited for him at the gate. In the little chamber a pair of candles stood lighted on the table, whereon a narrow white cloth was spread. The priest took from a sort of wallet of silk, having a red ribbon attached, a square piece of linen, which he spread, and a silver case resembling a locket. He opens the latter; he adores, kneeling; he lifts the sacred victim of salvation. Alban and the girl Bridget are kneeling, and he communicates the latter. He adores again; he closes the pix, replaces it, with the corporal and purificatory, in the bursa, and passes the ribbon round his neck.

It was a question whether Dr. and Mr. Cone would permit their house to be blessed, and holy water to be sprinkled through the rooms as a defence against the future incursions and return of the demons, if, indeed, the quiet which had continued since the exorcism of Eddy, intimated their effectual expulsion. Father

Xavier, (such was his name in religion,) refused to do any thing without the express permission of his hosts. The fear of being burned in their beds overcame the repugnance which they naturally felt to avail themselves of his assistance. At their formal request, he passed from room to room, reciting the appointed prayers, and sprinkling the element which the Church blesses with the expressed intention that "*whatever in the houses or abodes of the faithful this wave shall sprinkle, may be free from all impurity, be delivered from harm; that no pestilent spirit may reside there, nor corrupting air: that all the snares of the latent enemy may depart; and if there is any thing which is hostile either to the safety or the quiet of the inhabitants, by the aspersion of this water, it may flee away; that the salubrity which is sought by the invocation of Thy holy name, may be defended from all assaults.*"

They came upon Dr. Patristic snoring in bed in spite of the sunlight streaming betwixt the half-open shutters, and hallowed the room without disturbing his slumbers.

The astonishment and displeasure of Mrs. Cone were great when her departing guest declined to break his fast. He had not tasted their salt; he had not even pressed the couch provided for him. He assured her that he was accustomed to vigils; and as

for taking food ere his departure, he regretted to decline the hospitable offer, but decline it he must, since his first duty at Yantic would be to say mass for the small colony of Irish labourers and servant-girls whom the factories had collected around the Falls of the old Indian river.

Good Mrs. Cone was further astonished and afflicted to find that Alban was going to accompany the priest. The questions in regard to his baptism next came up, and made her dart a reproving glance at the blushing Mrs. Fay.

"Nay," said the grave Carmelite, "I myself remember something. Have you quite forgotten an old friend, Mrs. Cone? Time has altered us both, but I can retrace the laughing Fanny Cleaveland in my sedate hostess."

"Mr. Hewley!" cried Mrs. Cone, blushing as vividly as her sister.

"And how about this young man's baptism?" said the monk.

Mrs. Cone brought out a new feature of the case. Old Mrs. Atherton, Alban's grandmother, had been annoyed at the talk, and had got his uncle, the Bishop, to make all right, as she deemed, in private. Mrs. Cone herself, then an Episcopalian, had been god-mother, and her brother, a clergyman and the Bishop's

chaplain, had been godfather, when Dr. Grey baptized his great-nephew in the old Yanmouth church on a week-day Festival, and in the old marble font taken with the bell from the Spaniards. This was just after Mr. Hewley resigned the parish, and when the child was about eighteen months old. Mr. Cleaveland read the Church service, and the Bishop baptized the child after the second lesson, although, except old Mrs. Atherton, the two clergymen, and the narrator, not a soul was present. Mr. Cleaveland was since dead.

"I don't care if they read the whole prayer-book," said the monk, "or if the church was empty or crowded. All I want to know is how the Bishop performed the simple act of baptism."

"Oh, sir, he did not use the conditional form, I remember, because the Bishop considered all Presbyterian baptism invalid."

"That was a heresy. But did Bishop Grey use much water?"

"The hand brimming full," said Mrs. Cone, affecting to pour from her hollow hand as from a cup. "The quantity of water made Master Alby cry lustily. When I took him back from the Bishop, his fine light hair was wet enough to drip, and it ran all into his neck. I shall not soon forget it. For he was a year old at least."

"So far is highly satisfactory," said Father Xavier, glancing at Alban. "One point more remains, and it is one of great delicacy as well as importance. At what moment did the Bishop pour all this quantity of water, or did he pour it thrice?"

"Only once, I am sure, or I should have noticed it," responded Mrs. Cone. "He poured it, I presume, while he was pronouncing the words. The child cried so that I thought of nothing else at the time but that flood of water which the Bishop scooped out of the old font. No doubt Bishop Grey did every thing as it ought to be done, sir. A bishop, sir! of course!"

"The truth is," said Father Xavier, as Alban and he drove away from Dr. Cone's gate, "evidence is worth little after so much time has lapsed, unless the witness had her attention called particularly to the point."

"And am I still to remain suspended thus between heaven and earth, not knowing whether I am a Christian or not?" asked Alban, with a painful smile.

"Through no fault of Holy Church, my son. It would simplify the matter very much if we could say that all baptisms out of the Church are invalid. But the Church never seeks simplicity at the expense of truth. Sometimes an adherence to truth may involve her in perplexities which others do not feel; but she

is patient, and in the end order is developed under her unerring hand out of the most intricate seeming confusion."

"To be baptized *three times* is very repugnant to my feelings," said Atherton.

Father Xavier would say no more until they should again be alone. The missionary (for although merely on a visit to his native country, the monk was discharging the duties of an ordinary priest of the mission) heard a number of confessions at Yantic, said mass, and baptized some children. At length Alban was alone with him in the humble room overlooking the Falls, where the temporary altar had been erected. The young convert again knelt, and added some brief words to his previous confession.

"Think not of these things," said the priest, who in the confessional seemed another person. "Without grace it is impossible not to fall. Satan throws these seeming opportunities and suggestions in your way to tempt you partly, and partly to make you despair of God's goodness. You have made a good and sincere confession, I am very sure, and the Church cannot mean that you should make it fruitlessly. She cannot withhold from you the grace of which she is the dispenser. I really think it probable that you have been baptized, and I shall therefore absolve you, on the

invariable condition of 'so far as you need and I am able.' You must write to your right reverend uncle, and if his answer be satisfactory, you will need only to have the ceremonies supplied, and you can go to communion at once. But whatever his answer may be, you will never be obliged to repeat this confession. Remember that. For if you have been baptized, the absolution you are about to receive will be good, and if you have not been baptized, no absolution whatever will be necessary. Does this meet your wishes, my dear son? It is just the ordinary case of receiving absolution, but deferring communion. Bow your head, then, and renew your contrition for all the sins of your life."

In a moment it was over, and the sins of Alban's youth had passed away, we may believe, like darkness at the entrance of a bright light, and his star-like soul, formed to know and love its Creator, shone once more in the sight of the angels, brighter than Hesperus, or Lucifer, with the glorious beams of sanctifying grace. Hell had failed with all its arts.

CHAPTER XII.

IN July Alban visited New Haven by special permission, to attend the final examination of his class. He was almost forgotten. The class feeling was already dissolving. College had sunk into its true place, and men had their eye on the world. There was talk of keeping up old friendships, but it was mere talk. The Popery excitement had died a natural death. The President received Atherton kindly, and informed him that he would be allowed to deliver his oration. This great honour, so long anticipated and the cause of so many heart-burnings, seemed now a very small affair. Alban loved his *alma mater*, and that iron New England of which it was the intellectual representative, but he had taken the dimensions of them both. In all

this ancestral land of his, and in its university, not one thinker was to be found who dared maintain that the human will was truly self-determinant, or who deemed that grace had any other office than to compel the affections.

"Oh glorious liberty of the sons of God!" he exclaimed, as he walked under the endless arbours of the grove-like Academe, "you are here unknown!"

The rustication was now at an end, and Alban might have gone where he pleased; but he returned to Carmel to write his oration. His mother, whose health was delicate, was spending the summer with their relatives at Yantic, and he wished to be at least in her vicinity; for it was not pleasant either for Alban or the Athertons to associate much, his apostasy from the New England, or rather from the family faith, rendered him so odious. He frequently drove down to the Falls with Mrs. Cone or Rosamond Fay, and once they penetrated as far as Yanmouth, where Alban paid a visit to the "castle," which had been sold, modernized, and new furnished. But the stone-bound, iron-gray hills, and broad, breeze-ruffled waters were unchanged, and the white, massive brick pillars, black, many-sloped roof, and shrubberied terraces of the old Atherton house, still commanded the town and bay and fort-crowned heights.

At length the Seniors' six weeks were over, and from the open window of his chamber Alban watched for the last time the sun set upon the table-land of Carmel. The fiery orb sank behind the low blue ridge-line of the remote hills as beneath the rim of ocean.

It grew dark: the sounds of evening began to be heard; the katydid and the cricket made a concert; the fire-flies sparkled on the dusky green; a bat flew back and forth under the leafy button-balls.

There was a light tap at the door; he sung out "Come in," and little Rosamond Fay entered. Rosamond was clad in deep black. Alban sighed, kissed the orphan's forehead, and taking her hand, led her down into the piazza.

Something supernatural lingered to the last about the old house in Carmel. They say that strange noises are heard in it yet, particularly at night, and in certain chambers. The night that Alban slept there last, a certain wild inarticulate cry began soon after the family had retired, and never ceased till he was gone.

In a few days, our hero arrived with his mother in New Haven, where his father was already installed at the Tontine. The beautiful little city was full of strangers. The graduating class gave a ball. The Phi Beta gave a dinner. Commencement day came,

all music and orations, a church full of black coats and gay bonnets, degrees tied with blue ribbons, youths wearing mysterious society badges, and more valedictories said than were pronounced from the carpeted platform, where sat and listened, with unwearyed gravity, the elders of New England.

It is not often that a commencement oration attracts much attention, except for the fifteen minutes which it may occupy in delivery. Atherton's was one of the exceptions which now and then strike between wind and water, and hold such an audience as he had, profoundly interested from first to last. The subject — "The Necessity of Patience" — had already excited curiosity, augmented by the whispers floating about in relation to the singular opinions of the author. A nearly beardless youth, loosely and scholastically attired in black summer cloth, with the golden symbols of the Φ . B. K. and X. A. Θ . glittering on his watch-guard, and the badge of the Brothers' on his breast, stood in the circle — the triple, chaired corona — of gray-beards, bald intellectualities, and reverend white cravats. Two things struck people in Atherton's oration, its life-like reality and the absence of ornament in the style. The matter was important and original; the manner simplicity itself, showing that he had studied only to make his meaning per-

spicuous. And yet the peroration was highly rhetorical. It was almost impassioned, as the words of a human being speaking from a deep personal experience and sustained by an invincible faith.

The conferring of degrees was an imposing ceremony, particularly when the President put on his hat. Any thing symbolic is so rare in New England that it never fails to impress. The only want which our hero felt at the time arose from the absence of the De Groots. Mary, it was understood, was in a convent—but whether as a boarder or a postulant no one exactly knew—and her parents were at the Virginia Springs.

Henry Atherton was to be married the day after commencement, and Alban was to be one of the groom-men, but such was the hurry of all parties that he could learn little about the arrangements except the necessary particulars of time and place.

The day before commencement, going from the hotel to the colleges on an errand connected with his graduation, our hero had walked behind a party of some distinction, attended by Professor S——. Alban hated to pass people, and accommodated himself to their leisurely pace. In advance with the Professor walked a large, middle-aged matronly lady, with an imposing gait, and who talked a good deal. Behind them, an

officer in the undress uniform of the army, gallanted a young lady of an exquisite figure, in rose-coloured muslin and a white bonnet, managing with much grace a rose-and-white parasol. She was like a bouquet in motion under the mighty elms. The bronzed profile of her companion was often turned to her, and she answered the movement by a corresponding one, but that provoking bonnet hid her features.

When Alban had finished his business at the colleges, he strayed into the Trumbull Gallery, to take another last look at the pictures which he had once admired, and the same party were there. But Professor S—— had quitted them, and the officer was sitting by the matronly lady, while the graceful wearer of the rose dress sauntered round the room by herself, with a catalogue. Atherton observed her. She stopped longest before the very pictures which interested him; and at the portrait of Washington, bent down twice to read the names of the donors. Still he could not catch a glimpse of her face, until upon her friends calling her to come away, she turned back at the door of the inner room, and gave him a perfect view of her features. They were the sweetest mixture of fairness and bloom he had ever beheld — deep violet eyes, golden brown hair, with a fall of ringlets about the white throat; a nose, mouth, and

chin indicative of character, vivacity, tenderness, and purity. She caught the student's admiring glance, blushed, and hastily joined her friends.

In leaving the church with his father and mother, after the exercises were over on commencement day, he again saw this party, somewhat in advance. The gentleman and older lady looked back—and at him, he thought—as if they meant or wished to stop and speak; but after some hesitation, they proceeded without doing so. Their way was the same, and at last they all entered the Tontine, at the ladies' door. Alban hoped, with reason, to see the beautiful face again at tea.

He was not disappointed, for the ladies and their naval companion came to the tea-table and sat opposite them. The young lady, unbonneted, was lovelier still, for her head was perfectly classic, and the light summer evening toilet showed a neck and shoulders not less finely formed, and of dazzling whiteness. The purity and even bloom of her complexion yielded, as it were, to a visible blush the moment that her eye rested on Alban; nor did she quite recover from the suffusion while the brief sunset repast lasted. After tea, while his father and mother, worn out with the excitement and fatigue of the day, retired to their own room, he went into the

general parlour of the Tontine. The same party were there, grouped in a window that looked upon the green. The officer immediately advanced towards him.

"Mr. Atherton, I believe?" — Of course, any body who had been at commencement knew his name. — "There is a young lady here who says she has a right to be acquainted with you, Mr. Atherton."

Alban went forward, wondering, and not a little fluttered, notwithstanding his being now so used to ladies. She extended her hand with maidenly frankness and a look of affectionate archness, quite irresistible.

"You have forgotten your cousin Jane, Alban?"

"Jane! Is it possible that you are Jane!"

He embraced her, and she drew back confused, whereupon the elder lady, who was her aunt, observed with a smile that Jane and her cousin had been brought up like brother and sister. He found that Jane was to be one of the bridesmaids on the morrow.

"We shall stand up together," said Alban. "I owe Hal a turn for not telling me of this, nor even that you were here."

"We arrived but yesterday," said Jane, "and it has been such a busy day."

Moreover, Jane had promised to accompany Harry and his bride on their wedding-tour, (Niagara, of course,) and the groom-men were to be of the party. It is a custom yet in the States, and often makes one wedding the fruitful parent of several others.

We intend not to enter into the details of this interesting excursion; the transitions from the shady steamboat deck, on the noble river, to the flying rail-car that pierces the beautiful valleys; the walks from lock to lock in the deep cuttings of the great canal, still used for travel; the rocking on the seat of an American stage, hanging over waterfalls, gazing at mountains and lakes by moonlight, drinking Spa waters from bubbling fountains before breakfast, rolling nine-pins, satisfying keen young appetites at plentiful tables, dancing in the evening saloons at the springs. We may suppose that Jane had heard, from time to time, of Alban's college distinctions, and that she was not insensible to the slight romance of their meeting. She had listened to his beautiful oration with pride; she was making her first summer journey as a young lady in his company, and although young, "Alban was a graduate, and a graduate was a Man."

But at an early period of the tour, Jane became aware that a great change had taken place in her

cousin. The day on which they were steaming up the Highlands was the first of the discovery. The immense boat—not three hundred feet long indeed, like those which now ply on the same river, but able to accommodate some eight hundred passengers—was moving with scarcely a perceptible jar in its huge frame at a speed of nearly eighteen miles an hour, against the broad stream, shut in like a lake by green hills, under a sky of motionless *cumuli* and deep blue. They sat on the promenade-deck, with perhaps a hundred others, all forming little circles apart, keeping carefully beneath the awning, and the ladies protecting their complexions by thick green veils. Some read novels; some studied the map of the river; in which the chief thing that seemed interesting, after some historic sites, were the old seats of the Livingstons, Van Rensselaers, Van Brughs, and De Groots. Overlooking a beautiful sweep of the river, from a lawn-like opening in an extensive park or wood which ran for miles along the water's edge, a noble bluish-gray mansion, with a tower and wings, attracted general attention.

"The De Groot Manor!" said Mrs. Henry Ather-ton.

"What a beautiful situation!" exclaimed Jane.
"I like it best of all we have seen."

"Your friend Mary's father, cousin Alban," said Mrs. Atherton.

"Who is your 'friend Mary?'" asked Jane.

"The daughter of the Mr. De Groot who owns the fine mansion you see, and who, as well as his daughter, is a great friend of mine," said Alban.

"A *young* lady?" inquired Jane.

"When I saw her last she called herself sixteen."

"Oh! a little girl!" said Jane, who was almost twenty.

"Her father is not merely very rich," continued Alban, "but an elegant scholar, a collector of rare books and pictures, and a man of very peculiar and subtle powers of mind."

"What remarkable friends you seem to have," observed Jane. "Mr. Clinton—of whom you were telling me this morning, Mr. Seixas, and this Mr. De Groot. Is he of some strange out-of-the-way religion too?"

"He is professedly a Unitarian; really, a Pantheist."

"At least you won't apologize for *his* views."

"Yes," returned Alban, smiling. "The Unitarians have their good points. They recognise the importance of careful moral culture, and reap the fruit in great moral excellence. No Protestants are more famous

for truth, justice, amiability, and active benevolence. And those whom I have known pushed their ideas of decorum to prudery."

"Was your 'friend Mary' a little prude?" said Jane, smiling. "I think that is so odious in such young girls."

"What do you say, Mrs. Henry?" said Alban, turning to Mary Ellsworth. "Was Miss De Groot a little prude or not?"

"I have seen her box a gentleman's ears for a pretty slight cause," cried St. Clair, shrugging his shoulders.

"Oh! was she that sort!" cried Jane, with some disgust.

"I think," said Alban, "we may say that she had a delicacy of conscience on those points where your sex is supposed to be bound to a greater strictness than ours." And he still appealed to Mrs. Henry Atherton.

"Mary was propriety itself: I never thought her prudish," said Mrs. Atherton, with a slight bride-like blush.

"Well, I understand Unitarians," said Jane, "and Jews: but how an intelligent, shrewd man, as you describe Mr. Clinton, Alban, can be a sincere Roman Catholic, passes my comprehension."

"The only way to account for it is by the power of divine grace," said Alban.

Jane laughed.

"I hope we sha'n't get into any religious discussions," interposed Henry Atherton, rather severely.

"Nothing was further from my intention," said Alban. "Only Jane's remark made me feel queer."

Mary Ellsworth, (as for convenience we shall still call her, for there was another Mary Atherton of the party,) leaned over towards Jane and whispered to her audibly to ask Alban what he thought of the Church of Rome's prohibition of the marriage of cousins. Jane blushed.

"Is it prohibited?"

"Don't you know that? You and Jane are within the prohibited degrees, cousin Alban, — are you not?"

"Certainly, we are second cousins. We could not marry without a dispensation."

"You see, Jane, you will have to get the Pope's leave."

"Nonsense," said Alban. "Every bishop, and I believe, every parish priest in this country, can dispense in that degree."

"Where do you find in the Bible, Alb, that cousins must not marry?" asked Henry Atherton. "This appears to me one of those traditions and command-

ments of men which the Church of Rome is famous for imposing on men's consciences. It was a great instrument of her tyranny in those middle ages that you so much admire, as well as a rich source of emolument through the dispensations you speak of. First, she forbade what God's Word permitted, and then she took money to let you do it."

"Yes, Alban, you who can explain every thing," cried St. Clair, "pray give us an explanation of this. Jane looks for it anxiously."

"Since you appeal to me, I will answer," said Alban, quietly. "The Primitive Church forbade the marriage of cousins long before you suppose the Papacy to have arisen, and the Greek Church forbids it still, understanding the terms brother and sister in Scripture to include cousins. The example of the Patriarchs, which I know you will quote, proves nothing, for Abraham married his niece — his sister, as she is called in the Bible. The Church is a chaste and tender mother. It is true that she has drawn the bonds of consanguinity closer than under the old carnal dispensation. Her heart is more sensitive to the slightest claim of nature; she takes a wider circle of kindred into the nearness of blood affection; she is more jealous of that purity which refuses to mix the two kinds of love. Do you blame her for it?"

"Very fine, Alb, but it proves too much. If it is a question of Christian delicacy, no dispensation ought ever to be allowed. Why should the Church dispense with the slightest obligation of purity?" asked Henry, coldly.

"Why, indeed!" exclaimed Jane, in an indignant under tone.

"Still you misunderstand her. I am bound by her law to regard Jane as a sister, notwithstanding my knowledge that she may for good reasons remove the barrier between us and permit us to forget our common blood."

"Well, if that is not impertinence, I don't know what is," cried Mrs. Henry. "If I were you, Jane, I would remember it."

"Jane understands me better than you do," replied Alban, "and I am convinced that she is not offended because I say that no sister could be dearer to me than she is."

"I understand perfectly," said Jane.

"You all talk of Jane," exclaimed Mary Atherton, Henry's sister, who was older than her brother. "But no one seems to think that *my* feelings are outraged. Jane is only a second cousin after all, and as Alban says so pointedly, (encouraging Jane,) 'Any priest may dispense.' But I am a *first* cousin. No help for

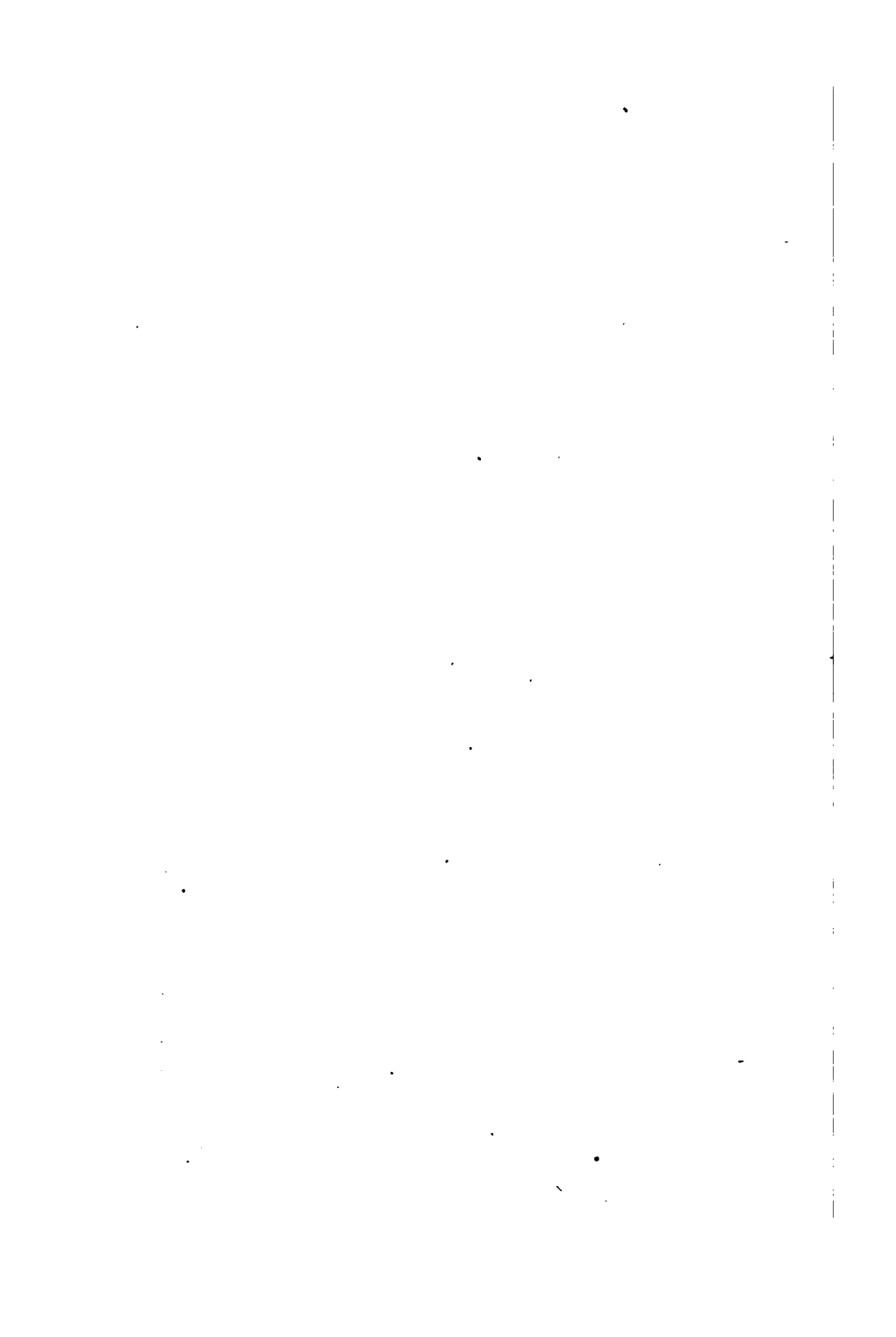
me short of the Pope! As Jane says" — mimicking her — "'I understand perfectly.'"

This sally made every one laugh, and brought the conversation back to safe ground. Alban promised, would Mary Atherton give him any encouragement, he would write to Rome for a dispensation at once.

"No, no!" she replied. "I shall take care how I expose myself to the charge of wanting delicacy towards my near relations. Henceforward, Alban, I regard you simply as a brother."

Henry Atherton told Jane afterwards that Alban was very eccentric. He had been nearly or quite an infidel, then almost a Jew, and now he talked as if he were going to turn Papist. They all hoped he would get over these crotchets as he grew older, and he (Henry) hoped a great deal from his affection for Jane herself.

From that time the subject was avoided, but Jane found it hard that wherever there was a Catholic church, however mean, Alban would go to it when they rested on the Sundays. This happened first at Babylon, and she knew not how to bear it to sit by herself in the square pew in the old meeting-house, where she and Alban in the old times occupied opposite corners, and thought more of each other than of long prayer or pleasant hymn, or even stirring sermon.



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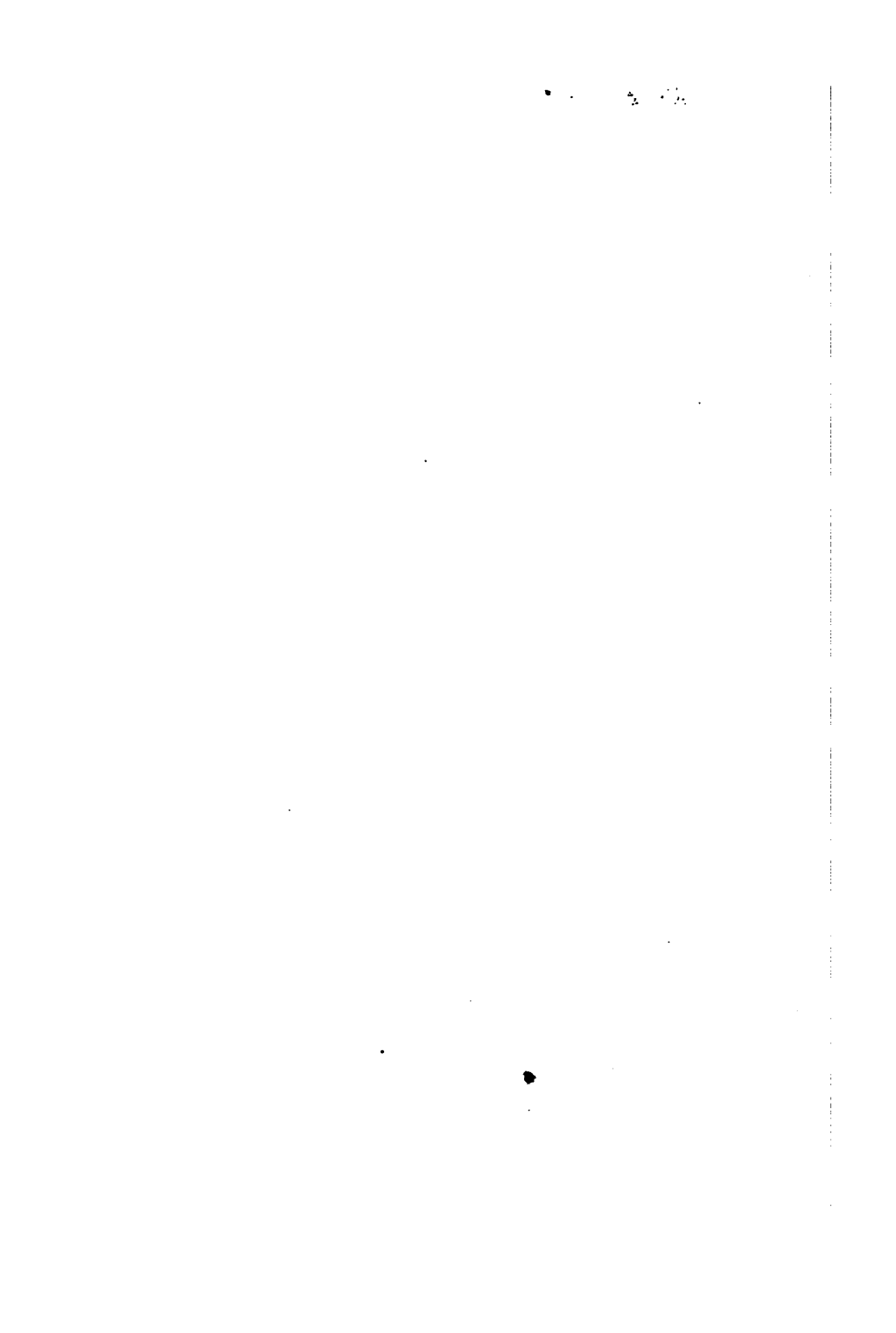
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